

BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Twenty-two year old Gertrude Zimmerman encountered mud show culture shock when she arrived on the Mills Bros. Circus lot in the spring of 1953.

She was the junior half of the Luvas Sisters from Germany. Her nickname Struppi came from the Struppigel, a hedgehog-like animal in Germany. After two seasons on Mills, the two person aerial act was booked by agent Al Dobritch on TV's Super Circus, the Ed Sullivan show and leading Shrine circuses. Struppi Luvas met Tommy Hanneford at the Detroit Shrine Circus in 1953, and they were married on December 8, 1955.

She left Trude Luvas and developed a single trapeze act using the Tajana name. By 1962 she was doing a single high wire act as Sherezade. Physical problems eventually prevented her from further aerial work. In 1972 she first presented a caged panther act. This later evolved to tigers.

Struppi was featured in the Hanneford Circus for many years. In recent years she has been a partner in building the Royal Hanneford Circus to its place of industry leadership. This season the Hanneford organization is presenting as many as four circuses at the same time.

Bandwagon salutes Struppi Hanneford, a grand lady of the circus. The cover photo of Tajana, the Goddess of Flight,

was taken by Cliff Glotzbach in 1967.

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THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW

1994 SEASON



BY FRED D. PFENING III

When Carson and Barnes general manager Jim Judkins called the 1994 season "a troubling year for circuses," he was referring more to the mountain of bad publicity the industry received rather than its financial health. In fact, although two shows failed and others struggled, overall the year was satisfactory at the box office with some companies having excellent returns. What made the year difficult were two negative stories that attracted national media attention. The first came in August when an elephant killed a trainer in Hawaii. The incident was videotaped with the grisley footage being run over and over the next few days. The other was in September when an elephant was videotaped while allegedly being mistreating. This tape too was featured on tabloid television shows.

The incidents fueled the flames of indignation among animal rights activists, confirming for them their worst fears about the treatment of circus animals, and giving them a national forum to proselytize their views. The events energized the animal rights community as never before as protesting and picketing of performances was on the upswing. Sponsors of at least two circuses were lobbied by animal activists to break their contracts, claiming that the shows abused their animals, an insidious tactic which made doing business oppressive for troupes working under auspices.

It was estimated that 40 states and cities were considering legislation to ban the exhibition of exotic animals, the most ever. A further sign of the shift in the political

winds occurred when the Shrine Circus Association of North America, the organization of Shrine circus chairmen, tabled a resolution supporting the use of animals on circuses, thus depriving the industry of a powerful ally. In sum, the use of animals on circuses was under assault as never before.

The year had its positive moments too. Two baby elephants captured the country's heart; the century's most famous performer made a mini-comeback; a black entrepreneur showed the po-

Program for Universal Big Top Circus at its world debut in Atlanta in November. Gordon Taylor collection.



Blue skies and grassy lots. Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus at Battleship Park in Mobile, Alabama, October 17 and 18. Tim Tegge photo.

tential of minority marketing; new lighting and sound systems on larger companies made their production values the equal of Broadway or rock shows; Manhattan saw three circuses in December; a permanent circus, albeit a new waver, was the biggest attraction in Las Vegas; and Ringling-Barnum, the industry's flagship, announced a bold expansion program. If not for the war with the animal activists, the year would be remembered as vibrant and lively.

Tented and otherwise, the outdoor branch of the business, while no longer the dominant format, was still a highly visible and viable means of exhibition. With a few notable exceptions, the tenters were a small town and suburban phenomenon as metropolitan areas generally attended their circuses in buildings. The big top continued to hold its mythic grip on the American psyche, so much so that tents and circuses were still linked in the public mind even though most people had not seen a show under a pavilion in years.

A highlight of the season, and the event that will most likely be recalled by future chroniclers was the appearance of the Universal Big Top Circus, America's first truly black show. While at least two, and possibly three, African-Americans had previously owned circuses, this was the first attempt to use largely black personnel and market to the African-American community. The show was the brainchild of Cedric Walker, a music promoter, who was inspired by an exhibit on blacks in the circus put

together by circus fan Rob Houston. Walker contacted all-around showman Manuel "Junior" Ruffin, who helped him frame the company and became personnel director. The result was a November 3-20 run of undercanvas sell outs in the parking lot of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium.

The production values were first rate. In fact, the interior of the rented George Coronas big top looked like Big Apple's. Particularly impressive was the lighting which included state of the art automated follow spots. Performers wore tiny receivers which the sixteen spot lights tracked wherever they went, bathing them in any number of colors and shapes.

Many black performers, both from the circus and the wider world of live show business, were engaged. Among the sawdust veterans were Chris and Ron Pace, aka Sugar and Spice, who did their cradle number; Ringling-Barnum alumna Pa-Mela Hernandez and Mari Khol-Lewis, aka Satin, who performed a new trapeze number after tutoring with the legendary LaNorma Fox; the venerable King Charles unicycle act; and the Vitas family in a karate demonstration and a hand balancing routine. Black newcomers to the arenic world were rodeo cowboy Rex Purefoy, ringmaster Cal "Casual Cal" Dupree, and magician Gilbert Wright. Three of the show's four African-American clowns were graduates of Clown College, including Danise Payne who had been featured in the L. A. Circus.

Exotic program cover for Cirque du Soleil's production *Mystere* at the Treasure Island Casino in Las Vegas. Author's collection.

Most of the other acts had a black slant. Ted McRae, an African-American, assisted Bucky Steele, and later Chip Arthurs, in the elephant act. McRae was also featured in Kay Rosaire's cat act, portraying Daniel in the lions' den. As the house lights darkened, a deep voice came over the sound system, telling the Biblical story of Daniel. Suddenly the roar of lions bellowed from under the seats as the lights came up to reveal McRae kneel-



I have seen the future and it's French-Canadian. Fabulous costuming used in Cirque du Soleil's production *"Mystere"* at the Treasure Island Casino in Las Vegas. Al Seib photo courtesy Cirque du Soleil.

ing in the cage in prayer as an angel of mercy, Kay Rosaire cast against type, came in to save him and work the cats. The production was very effective and reflected the creativity and attention to detail that characterized the show. Also on the bill were Bill Brickle with his poodles, and Roger Zoppe and Pam Rosaire with their chimps. In all, it was a noble effort which garnered much national publicity and helped enhance the industry's visibility in the African-American community. Among the visitors was Ringling-Barnum president Kenneth Feld, doubtless studying ways to increase black patronage at his circuses.

Cirque du Soleil had a huge impact on the business as its glitziness and outrageous special effects were in evidence on other shows. Further, its high profile engagement in Las Vegas was seen by more people and received more publicity than any previous edition. The touring unit opened in its home city of Montreal from April 12 to May 29. Extended dates in Quebec City, San Francisco, San Jose and Santa Monica completed the year.

The new under-canvas production was entitled "Alegria," jubilation in Spanish, although at least one pundit cracked it meant pretentious. Indeed, the printed program was full of pseudo-intellectual nonsense

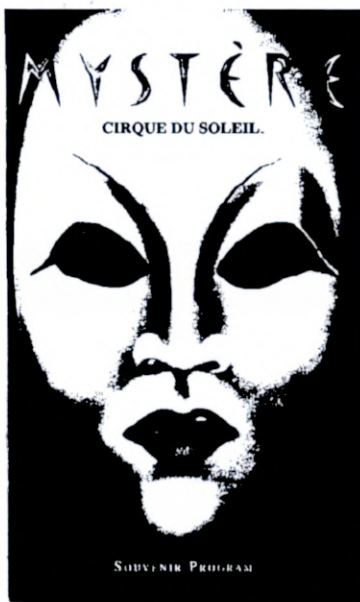
such as "If you have no voice, scream; If you have no legs, run; If you have no hope, invent," the kind of thing which passed for wisdom among the sensitive but immature. The performance itself was dark, foreboding and ominous, the kind of circus Franz Kafka would have produced if he had produced circuses. It was, however, full of the fabulous choreography, bizarre costumes, cutting edge lighting, and new age music, all of which had become the hallmark of the company. While the overall production overwhelmed the individual acts, some of the actors shined such as Rick Zumwalt in a strong

man routine, Xavier Lamoureux on the single trapeze, Mikhail Matorin on aerial straps, and the Flying Lev.

"Mystere," the second unit, opened at Las Vegas' Treasure Island Casino on Christmas Day 1993. This super nova of a circus, on a scale with *Starlight Express* or *Les Miserables*, was unquestionably the most massive production ever seen on these shores. Using revolving and descending floors, banks of smoke, and futuristic lighting and sound, the show took "an apocalyptic view of life, creation and the mystery of the universe," all of which seemed like a lot to pack into two hours. Everything was larger than life; the intensity of the performance had an overpowering, otherworldly feel to it which in places looked all the world like some ancient pagan ritual. It was, in the words of one reviewer, a "hallucination given form." Among the acts was an inventive bungee cord trapeze routine, a Russian flying return, and the hand balancing Alexis brothers who had previously appeared on Big Apple and Ringling-Barnum.

A third unit, "Saltimbanco," which loosely translated to "street performer," appeared in Japan from March to September before returning home to Montreal for a November run in a converted warehouse which sat 2000. This production, which had had presented under-canvas in the United States in 1993, included sisters Karyne and Sarah Steben in their trapeze number, band balancers Marco and Paulo Loraador, and tight rope walker Wag Jingmin.

Hard to Believe Department: A second permanent Soleil production in Las Vegas was announced late in the year when Steven Wynn, chairman of Mirage Resorts, said that a new Soleil show would be the centerpiece of his new Beau Rivage Casino, scheduled for com-





The bill stand was not a completely lost art. Ralph Gifford stands in front this just-completed daub posted on July 30 for the August 8 engagement in Baraboo, Wisconsin of all places. Tim Tegge photo.

pletion in 1996 on the former site of the Dunes Hotel on the strip. The 1500 seat venue was slated to be unlike anything seen before with a huge pool and indoor fireworks.

Two final notes: The \$52.50 general admission for the show at Treasure Island was the most ever charged for a circus in America. Soleil took a wait ad against Ringling-Barnum in Chicago in November--which wasn't unusual except that the Soleil date was for July 1995.

The Carson and Barnes Circus opened on March 19 in Paris, Texas, then played Oklahoma and Arkansas before moving into the Plains states and the Midwest, staying in the latter from early July to late October. The trek home went through the border states with the finale coming in Arkansas on November 13. It was worth the effort as the show had a good year at the box office.

This marvel of efficiency was the last of the giant one-night stand aggregations which once prowled the countryside with impunity by rail. Six 2-day stands were played, the remainder being one dayers. The odometers registered a hair over 13,000 miles during the tour with each of the about forty show-owned vehicles averaging around 56 miles a day.

The five ring exhibition was under a new big top. Displays included Cindi Cavallini with Friesian stallions, Donnie Carr with elephants, Luciana Loyal in bareback riding, the Flying Poemas and the Flying Piccolos, and John Fraz-

er with the cage act. Among the newcomers were ringmaster John Moss and performance director Laura Herriott.

The menagerie, a glorious throwback to the days of Jess Adkins' depression era Hagenbeck-Wallace show, carried 20 elephants, a hippo, a zebra, a white rhino, camels, a giraffe, and a number of horses and ponies. The show lost two veterans when the elephants Mona and Kay died two days apart in late October, the former at the Evansville, Indiana zoo while being treated for an infection, and the latter in Taylorville, Illinois of natural causes.

The circus set up the Endangered Ark Foundation to raise funds to acquire facilities to breed and protect endangered exotic animals such as elephants and tigers. Late in the year the D. R. Miller family, the show's owners, pledged \$140,000 to their home town Hugo, Oklahoma school system for scholarships for graduating seniors.

The Clyde Beatty and Cole Bros. Circus, the other big touring tent, started in its winter home of Deland, Florida on March 29. Playing its traditional route, the show moved up the Atlantic seaboard, reaching Maryland in early May. The rest of the summer was spent in the mid-Atlantic and New England states, with a long stretch in the New York City area. Fall dates in the Southeast preceded the early November closing in Florida.

Traveling behind 27 show-owned steering wheels, the company saw a little over 9,000 miles of highway with the longest jump being 230 miles. Only nine single-day engagements were on the schedule, the rest being two or longer. In general the season was

satisfactory with only a two-day stand in Louisiana lost due to flooding, although the show took a hit when owners John Pugh and Doug Holwadel settled a tax judgment in Tennessee for over \$60,000.

The performance featured Khris Allen with tigers, Dawnita, Gloria and Bonnie Bale with dressage and liberty horses, the Quiros troupe on the high wire, human cannonball Sean Thomas in Elvin Bale's shooter, Venko Lilov's bears, Fred Logan with elephants, and the Flying Rodriguez. Veterans Jimmy James and James Haverstrom were again ringmaster and bandmaster. The Etruscan Circusphere, in which the ring curbs were rearranged into an eclipse covering the entire arena to create one huge "ring" instead of the standard three smaller ones, was incorporated into the performance for a second year.

The Big Apple Circus, the Masterpiece Theater of the arenic world, started trouping in Brooklyn in late March. A month in Boston followed before a series of dates in the New York City area. The big jump to Detroit followed, after which the company headed back East for four New England dates with the finale at Shelburne, Vermont on July 31. The fall-winter season began in late September with about twenty days near Washington, D. C., followed by the great, grand run at Lincoln Center in the heart of Manhattan from October 20 to January 8, 1995.

The spring and summer production was a reprise of the 1993 winter offering. Entitled "Carnevale in Venice," it featured the Collins brothers in a

Grandma Meets Mummenschanz was the title of the new Big Apple Circus production. Here Stormy and Skye Williams assist Barry Lubin in doing just that. Paul Gutheil photo.



comedy trapeze turn, clowns Ramano and Alfredo Colombaioni, the Shenyang acrobatic troupe in an aerial routine, Katja and Max Schumann with liberty horses, juggler Serge Percelly, and Ben and Darlene Williams with the Woodcock elephants. Founder Paul Binder was ringmaster. While being torn down in Boston, the framework of the new French big top was damaged, causing the show to bring the previous year's tent out of retirement.

"Grandma Meets Mummenshanz," the new extravaganza, maintained the exacting standards of previous editions as the lighting, pacing, music, costumes and mix of acts were all of the highest order. Headlining the presentation were the Mummenshanz, a Swiss concept which had been on Circus Knie and on Broadway, in which black costumed dancers appeared as amorphous blobs, slinkies and disembodied hands in acrobatic routines. The production also marked the return of Barry Lubin, aka Grandma, who had been off the show for a couple of years. Other acts included Elena Panova on the single trapeze; German plate spinner Jean Lemoine; James Clowney, Carlos Guity and Melinda Merlier in a living statue routine; Katja Schumann and her father Max with a Mexican-themed liberty act; Lisa

New poster designed for Circus Vargas. Doug Lyon collection.

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Dufresne with her four pigs and a herd of ducks; the Egorov troupe in a casting act; and Benny, Darlene, Stormy and Skye Williams with the Woodcock elephants. Linda Hudes wrote, as she does every year, an engaging score for Ric Albani's band.

Circus Vargas sprung to life in California in early March and stayed in that state almost the entire season before closing in Las Vegas in late November, thus covering only 3000 miles of highway compared to 8000 the previous year. The eight weeks spent in San Diego and its environs was the longest run in that area in the show's history. The tour was a difficult one with business up and down as the show went into quarters owing money to performers, vendors and staff.

Owners Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello cut all exotic animals from the performance, leasing out the company's elephants to other shows. Among those on the program were Manny Valdo in a comedy bungee cord routine, the Yankovi troupe on the Russian swing and teeterboard, Kenya's Bantu Warriors in an acrobatic and dancing turn, Miguel Ferrerri on the low wire, Rebecca Perez on the single trapeze, the Flying Tabaras, and Tina Dubsky with fourteen dogs, the only four-footed mammals on the bill. The music was recorded and Tommy Baker was ringmaster.

The King Royal Circus began in Texas in March, and played the Southwest and Midwest through August before heading West. Dates in the Plains and Southern states followed before a mid-December Texas closing. The show split itself into two units for a portion of the season. A blow down in Nevada caused the company to sidewall it for a while.

This opera carried a fine menagerie that included six elephants, a giraffe, three zebras, seven peacocks, a camel, a dozen llamas, and numerous horses, ponies, goats and sheep. George the giraffe died in Texas in late March; he was later replaced. While the performance experienced some turnover in personnel along the way, at various times it included Pat Davison on the rola bola and juggling, Arturo and Kay Castrejon on the wheel of death and in a cradle act, Bela Tabak with peacocks, Walt Stimax with his monkeys, and Sebrina and Tanya Hermann in equine displays. Owner John "Gopher" Davenport often worked the cats while his wife Gigi did a single trapeze routine. The music was recorded, and Benjamin Davenport. Mel Silverlake and Billy Earl were all ringmasters at one time or another.

The show got in a jackpot in Lebanon, Oregon in September when Bela Tabak was charged with a mis-



Mel Silverlake (l.) and John "Gopher" Davenport (r.) on the lot of the King Royal Circus at Homer, Louisiana on November 14. Hank Fraser photo.

demeanor and released on a \$500 bond after he was arrested for allegedly beating an elephant during a performance. A videotape of the incident was broadcast on national television as actors and animal rights activists Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin accused the show of cruelty to animals on the *Crusaders* television show.

Allen Bros. Circus opened in Texas in March and appeared in the Southwest and West before going in the barn in late November. The one ring tent featured snake master Scott Taylor, and the Flying Lunas, who also worked a Russian swing act. The cat and elephant acts were worked by Joe Browitt or owners Allen or Earlynn Bedford. For part of the season Senor Rai was ringmaster and performed illusions. Al Leonard and Ray Grant were ringmasters at other times.

Circus Flora, the new waver founded by David Balding, debuted with two engagements at different locations in its home town of St. Louis. Exhibitions in Charlotte in September, Houston in October and Scottsdale, Arizona at year's end concluded the season. A non-profit corporation, the company had a month long residency, where it presumably taught circus skills, in a Native American community near Scottsdale.

The production's theme, "California: The Journey's End--Part II," continued the saga of the Baldini family, a fictional 19th century circus clan. It featured Flora veterans such as Giovanni Zoppe with his comedy revolving ladder, Sacha Pavlata in a cloud swing, the Flying Wallendas, clown Larry Pisoni and Flora the elephant. Also on the bill were the St. Louis Arches, a home-grown acrobatic troupe, and the Suarez riding



The Kelly-Miller Circus was the only show to offer a free attraction on the midway. Richard Murillo is seen here on the wheel of death in Greensburg, Indiana on May 17, 1994. Bill Rhodes photo.

family. Cecil MacKinnon was ringmistress. The performance alternated between the story line and traditional tanbark routines under a one ring tent which sat 1,500.

The Kelly-Miller Circus romped in the Southwest, Midwest and East from April Fool's Day until the end of October. Its twenty trucks covered about 11,000 miles, adding to the odometers almost every day as the show played only five 2-day stands and two 3-day stands. The midway had the usual attractions, an elephant ride, moon bounce, et. al., but also included a side-show and a wheel of death act as a free show, both common practices a century ago, but rarities today. Company president David Rawls was the general agent while his brother Bill was road manager.

The under canvas talent included the Murillo family on the high wire and in a bareback riding routine; Kurt and Heidi Casady in aerial cradle, perch, and Roman ring acts; the Jensac brothers on the low wire, in a cradle turn and juggling; Bobby Fairchild in a knife throwing display; Myrna Silverlake with dogs; Cindy Herriott Wells with liberty horses; and Roy Wells with the elephants. Fairchild was the ringmaster and Marshall Eckelman led a three piece band.

Roberts Bros. Circus, headed by Doris Earl and her family, frolicked from late March to the beginning of November in the South, East and Midwest, going as far west as Ohio and as far north as Maine. New equipment included a workingmans' sleeper, a new semi which housed the show's two generators and the big top canvas and poles in the back. The midway was typical: pony sweep, moon bounce, elephant ride, and snake show.

The performers included Leanne Earl

with liberty horses, Yvonne Stephens with Liowa the llama and pot bellied pigs, Ken Taylor in a cloud swing and on the single trapeze, and Ken Benson with whips and ropes, and with Lisa the elephant. Rod Wainwright and Nick Weber, the latter late of the Royal Liechtenstein Circus, were clown alley. Bill Schreiber was the announcer.



Wayne Franzen (l.) and Ken "Turtle" Benson (r.) at Galax, Virginia on October 2 when Franzen Bros. and Roberts Bros., Benson's show, were both bought out by Sara Lee. Cam Cridlebaugh photo.

The show was dogged during the season by a group called Friends of Animals from Darien, Connecticut, which put out a pamphlet entitled "Free Lisa" which encouraged people to boycott all circuses with animal acts, to encourage friends to do the same, and to support pending California legislation which would limit the number of hours a day which an elephant could be chained.

The Sara Lee Knit Products division bought out both Roberts Bros. and Franzen Bros. at Galax, Virginia on October 2. The companies were set up side by side and the performance times were staggered. This was almost certainly the first time a sponsor had bought out two circuses at once. It was the mother of all buy-outs as Sara Lee not only provided free admission to the performances, but also paid for the elephant and pony rides, popcorn and cotton candy.

The Alain Zerbini Circus had a warm-up at a Tampa flea market in February before a 108 day trek in the East from early May to mid-August. At various times clowns Bobby Davis and Billy Barton, the Boger family with bison and longhorn steer, the Geraldo family on the high wire, rola bolaist Tinkerbell Waltens, and Bret Bronson with his two African bulls appeared under a new big top. Travis Green was ringmaster and the music was recorded.

Franzen Bros. Circus appeared in the East, Midwest, and South from late March until early December. Like an amoeba, the show split itself into two units on occasion. This one had a tough season, having difficulty booking dates among other problems. Among the performers were the Ayala family who did a number of aerial and acrobatic turns. Buddy Manely was the ringmaster. Owner Wayne Franzen presented the elephant, tiger, and pony acts. His ubiquitous ring presence was unique among his brethren, and a throwback to the early days of the American circus when the proprietor was often the star performer.

Walker Bros. Circus rumbled in the South and Midwest from March to October, moving on six trucks, two semis and four goosenecks. The animal semi over-turned in Tennessee in late September; two elephants, four ponies and a camel were unhurt, only a horse sustained injury. The midway had a pet-

The Alain Zerbini Circus at Oakland, New Jersey on June 5. Al House photo.





Walker Bros. Circus at Sheboygan, Wisconsin on August 6. Johnny Walker Jr. is working the elephants. Tim Tegge photo.

ting zoo, a pony sweep, an elephant ride, moon bounce, concession trailer, and ticket wagon.

The tent, an 80 foot round top with a 40 foot middle section, was new. Under it Bill Brickle's poodles; Ron and Robin Dykes in aerial cradle, unicycle, juggling and low wire routines; and the Zamperla family with horses and on unicycles and bicycles all earned their pay. Owner Johnny Walker worked the elephants and Dick Johnson was the ringmaster.

Bentley Bros. Circus, owned by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey, had four tours. The first was an under-canvas run through Florida in February and March. The spring season in the West began in April and continued through June. The summer romp in the Midwest, East, and upper South

George Allen performs his aerial hoop walk on a typical outdoor Bentley Bros. Circus engagement at Hackensack, New Jersey on June 25. Paul Gutheil photo.



started in June and went on and off through September. The year concluded with a Christmas march in the East. The core spring and summer dates were often sponsored by police and fire fighter groups.

The early year performances were held under a 180 foot round top tent with four seat wagons surrounding the single ring. The spring and summer dates were generally sidewalled. Among the acts with the summer edition were the Ali Ahmed Moroccan acrobats, Jack Cook with his comedy car, the hand balancing Guerguievs, the Roberto Zerbin family in a number of acrobatic and juggling turns, George Allen on the single trapeze, the Flying Gaonas, Diane Moyer with the elephants, Robert Moyer with six ligers, and human cannonball Dave Smith. Jim Miller was in charge of the band and Jerry Eye-stone was the ringmaster.

The Great American Circus made history at its late February opening by becoming the first circus ever to exhibit on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum. A tour of the South, Midwest and East followed. Business was bad throughout the season, and on August 13 the show closed in Massachusetts. In early 1995 the equipment and quarters were for sale, indicating this long-running title had seen its last.

Among the arenic stars under the single ring big top were the hand balancing Golden Carlos Twins, the Bautista family on the teeterboard and in a space wheel, Tavana Luvas on single trapeze, and Mike Rice with Pulsar the liberty

horse and with Irene the elephant. Brian LaPalme was ringmaster and ate fire. At the Sarasota opener, owner Allan C. Hill worked an aerial number with his daughter Heather, and Tiny Tim, a Great American alumnus, was special guest performer.

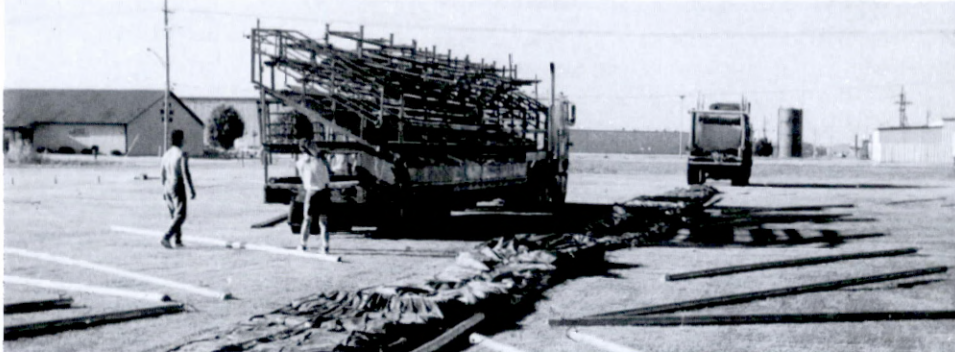
The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus, headed by Robert "Red" Johnson, opened its doors on March 7 in Arizona, playing Western and Mountain states through the summer before moving into the Plains and Southwestern states where the season concluded in late October. The company had a typical mid-way with a petting zoo, moon bounce, pony and elephants rides, and a combination concession and office semi. Displays included Oran Luke on the high wire, the Kiss trio in a hand balancing routine, Terrell Jacobs in a whip cracking act, Jim Jajicek with Barbara the elephant, fire eater Curtis Cainan,



Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus was a popular show in the East. The main entrance is shown here at the Dalton, Massachusetts date on July 21-22. Dan McGinnis photo.

Lynn Jacobs on web, and Heidi Wendany with her dogs and later with the dressage horse Excalibur. Tom Tomashek was band leader and Dean Girard was ringmaster.

Seat wagons were an important labor saving device on many tented shows. One of the units on Allan Hill's Great American Circus is shown here. Bill Rhodes photo.





Vidbel's Old Tyme Circus played its usual route of six states in the East from late April to early October under an 80 foot round top with a 40 foot middle which sat 1,100. The troupe moved on two show-owned semis and two straight bed trucks. It was the 11th season for owners Al and Joyce Vidbel.

Talent included George Bertini on the low wire and on a unicycle, the riding Svensons, the Robert Lang family in a comedy knockabout routine, the Bannister family's dogs, Susan Vidbel with her exotic birds, and Jennifer Vidbel with her midjet horses. The show employed three different elephant acts during the season: Bones Craig, Frank Murray, and Tom Demry.

Reid Bros. fulfilled its usual Spring route. Starting in Oregon in early April it moved to the Mountain states, and then the Great Plains and Midwest before calling it quits in late June. The fall Texas dates ran from mid-September to mid-October. A new and larger big top

The Northwind Circus appeared under an old Vidbel top in New York City in December. Al House collection.

Reid Bros. on a nice lot in Marshalltown, Iowa on June 20. Tim Tegge photo.

was used on the spring engagements. Wilson Barnes with the Don Johnson tigers, Joe Long with his bears, chair balancer and Roman ringer Jens Larsen, the Flying Rameriz, and Franklyn Murray with his elephants appeared under it. John Fugate was ringmaster. Personnel on the fall itinerary was similar.

Hendricks Bros. Circus, owned by Bob Childress, a carnival owner and ride manufacturer, joined the exalted ranks of tenters when it trekked through the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida in October and November under a 75 foot top with one 40 foot middle section. In-ring personnel included Ron and Robin Dykes in a cradle act and on the slack wire, Mike Rice with his dressage horse, foot juggler Vickie Howle, and Tom Demry with a mixed act of llamas and birds, and later with Anna Louise the elephant. Dick Johnson was the ringmaster and performed illusions, and Elmo Gibb and John Burke were the clowns.

The L. A. Circus spot dated in the vicinity of its namesake city from April to October, generally playing weekends in a large range of venues from hospitals to housing projects to downtown plazas. On the roster were foot juggler Chester Cable, hand balancers and Roman ringers Jens and Maggie Larsen, hula hooper Matt Plendl, and Ken Jones and Darlene Williams with Dixie the elephant. Michael Heatherton was the ringmaster and Bill Payne led a five piece band. The non-profit had a rough season. At year's end, Jim Withrow, its new director, characterized the company's condition as "fragile."

The Northwind Circus was a fund raising vehicle for the North Wind Undersea Institute in the Bronx. Michael Sandlofter, the husband of Sharon Vidbel, the daughter of show owners Al and Joyce Vidbel, was the founder of both the

show and the Institute which rescued beached whales and seals. Calling itself the Circus with a Purpose, the performance informed the audience about topics ranging from ecology to history. The displays, under an old patched up Vidbel tent, featured a Cherokee hoop dance, and a wire walker. After a three day try out in Pawling, New York in October, the troupe played Riverside Park in Manhattan for most of December. It was probably the first time ever that two tented circuses (Big Apple was in the midst of its big Lincoln Center date) appeared simultaneously in Manhattan; it was certainly the first time two did in December.

The Great Wallenda Circus had a tented three day date in Brooklyn for a Hasidic Jewish group in late September in which Larry Allen Dean with his tigers, the Flying Cortez, musical clown Italo Fornasari, Bill Morris with his elephants, and John Whitfield with his dogs performed. David Locke was ringmaster and Kay Parker had the band. Owner Rick Wallenda appeared on the high wire. Wallenda had his circus at a few other locations including Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia in the spring. He spent the summer as a single attraction at an amusement park in Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania with his children and his sister Rietta. A one ringer, Phills Bros. Circus stomped through New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania from May to September on three trucks and two trailers. The Valencia family put on most of the show, and owner Bill Phillips was ringmaster.

Gran Circo Nacional de Cuba en El Exilio (the Great National Circus of Cuba in Exile for French majors) was scheduled to go from November 1 to 9 on the parking lot of Miami's Orange Bowl, then continue to another stand at nearby Haileah before going to Mexico. Unfortunately the plans came to naught as extremely poor business forced the Jesus Segrera family, the owners, to

The El Circo Nacional de Cuba en el Exilio appeared under canvas on the parking lot of Miami's Orange Bowl in early November. Arnold Brito photo.

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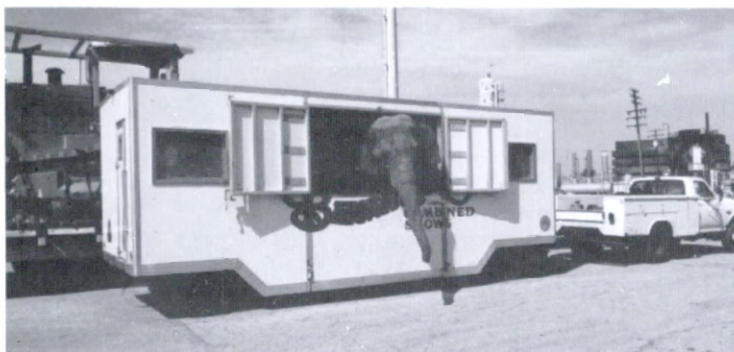
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Special trailer built to convey elephants Romeo and Juliette and their mothers to and from the arena on the Ringling-Barnum Blue unit. Jerry Cash photo.

close it down after the November 6 performances. Working under a rented Harold Barnes tent, the displays included Bruno Blaszk with his tigers, and the Posso brothers on the high wire. The Big Top Circus, a generic name if there ever was one, had at least single dates in Ohio and Illinois in June. Headed by Jim Davis, the one ring display included Paul Hoskinson with a mixed animal act, Chuck Walter with Laura the elephant and juggler and unicyclist Jay Gilligan.

Circuses which sold their product indoors constituted the largest segment of the market. These aggregations played virtually everywhere from Madison Square Garden in New York City to the armory in Podunk, Iowa. These shows, often maligned for not representing "real" circus, have been the backbone of the business for years and provided more employment than any other variation of trouping. So strong was this area's growth that it changed the industry's calendar, making the early months of the year a more active period than the summer months. Unquestionably more people witnessed performances indoors than out, a commentary on both the changing nature of American society, and the ability of show executives to adjust to new conditions.

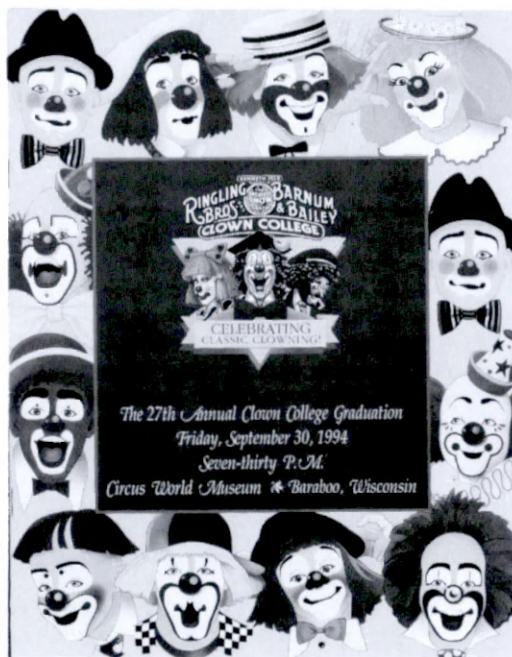
For the mighty Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus it was a year of triumph and tragedy, the latter coming on January 13 when clown Ceslee Conkling and elephant trainer Ted Svertesky were killed in a derailment of the Blue show train near Lakeland, Florida. Fortunately, because the jump between St. Petersburg and Orlando was so short, few people were on the train, thus preventing further casualties. In spite of the wrecked railroad cars being unusable, things returned to some semblance of normality after three missed performances as personnel were

transported by bus and put up at motels for the remainder of the season.

The troupe worked its way north through North Carolina and Virginia before the big March 9 to May 1 run in the New York City metropolitan area, concluding with five weeks at Manhattan's fabled Madison Square Garden. Other engagements in the arena-rich East followed before the annual mega-jump from Philadelphia to Tulsa which began the western swing. After two months in California the company headed back into the Midwest for a December 11 finale at Rosemont, Illinois.

The stars of the show were Romeo and Juliette, the first pair of baby elephants exhibited on a circus since Barnum and London did it in 1882. Also featured was Graham Thomas Chipperfield (moving over from the Red show) with the cat act and an elephant-teeterboard routine, Johnny Peers with his dogs, the Panteleenko with a Russian strap act, the Flying Alvarez and the Flying Vargas, the Boulbikov rid-

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College graduation program. Author's collection.



Ringling-Barnum elephant bosses Jimmy Silverlake, Gunther Gebel-Williams and Buckles Woodcock at Madison Square Garden Blue unit opening. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

ers, Jon Weis and James Halliday in a double-barreled human cannonball display, the Mednikov high wire act, the Boger family with steers and bison, Lynbov Chepiakova and Vilorik Kim with horseback riding bears, and Jean Christophe Fournier on the single trapeze. Bill Woodcock took over the elephant department after Svertesky's death, working one ring while Patricia Zerbini and Tom Haffner worked the other two.

Pre-wreck, the train was 53 cars. Afterwards, the consist totaled 39 cars, 4 stocks, 18 coaches, 16 flats, and one bi-level. The accident put 14 coaches out of commission. A wagon was used to transport Romeo and Juliette and their mothers to and from the train, making them the first elephants on the show to use this form of conveyance since Pawah the white elephant in 1927. In all, this Blue unit appeared in 45 towns, saw 14,000 miles of countryside, and was the first circus in two new venues, Cleveland's Gund Arena and Chicago's United Center.

The Red unit started its second season in Florida in late December 1993 and played through the South before reaching Cincinnati in March. Dates in the Border states followed before jumping to Oklahoma City for the May 17-June 1 spring layover. Southern, Southwestern, Plains, and Midwestern states filled the route card through the end of September, after which the troupe made a big city march through Detroit, Boston, Buffalo, Toronto (back on the itinerary after a number of years), and Pittsburgh before the November 20 closing at St. Louis.

Gunther Gebel-Williams was a national news maker when he came out of retirement to appear in the cage act during the Cincinnati engagement. He also performed during the July Houston run, and footage from these efforts was

shown in a December television show. Gebel-Williams last appeared in the ring on November 18, 1990 in Pittsburgh. Other acts included clown David Larible, the Espanas with their wheel of death, Tina Gebel with her horses, Mark Oliver Gebel with the elephants and zebras, the Lee Stevens family with ponies and baboons, the Chicago Kidz and the Children of Chereprovets from Russia in acrobatics, the Kaganovitch in their great aerial casting routine, Vivien Larible on the single trapeze, and Rudy and Sue Lenz with their chimps. Eric Michael Gillett was the ringmaster and Keith Greene was band leader.

This unit played 50 towns and moved almost 17,000 miles. The train was cut by one car from 1993, and had 4 stocks, 30 sleepers, 15 flats, a bi-level car, and a concessions storage car. Ringmaster Gillett released a CD of popular songs including three he sang in the show. Baboon trainer Judy Stevens was off the show for awhile after breaking her ankle in February while performing in Atlanta.

In other Ringling-Barnum news, the show announced in July that a third unit of the circus would tour South America in the fall of 1995, with a fourth unit to play Asia and Australia in 1996. Both units were to travel by truck and possibly appear under canvas. President and Producer Kenneth Feld was the recipient of the 10th annual Irvin Feld Humanitarian Award sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in April. In September Feld announced he had joined with two others to form Pachyderm Entertainment to develop an international tour of his hit clown show *Fool Moon*, to install an IMAX theater in New York City, and to create a live-show musical version of the movie *Big*. Soon after, it was revealed that he had purchased the arena show rights for the movie *Wizard of Oz* from Turner Entertainment, and that Feld had set the goal of becoming a billion dollar company by 2000.

Besides the two units of Ringling-Barnum, Feld also produced the Siegfried and Roy magic show at Las Vegas' Mirage Casino and *Fool Moon* in Los Angeles, and toured the George Lucas Super Live Adventure and numerous ice shows in both the United States and overseas. At a September industry meeting Allan Bloom stated that the ice shows' grosses were equaling, and in some markets exceeding, those of the circuses. During the year a number of new management positions were an-



Flora the elephant on the Moscow Circus at New York's Madison Square Garden on December 15. Paul Gutheil photo.

nounced with new faces taking over as manager of the Blue show and clown college.

Clown College returned for the second year to the Circus World Museum where 30 newly-minted funsters graduated on September 30. Late in the year the company bought 200 acres of land between Tampa and Orlando to be used as a breeding farm and retirement home for elephants with room for up to 50 bulls. Roman Schmidt, who had sold his elephants to Ringling-Barnum earlier in the year, was expected to run it. Say it Ain't So Kenneth Department: Ringling-Barnum concession items were sold on the home shopping channel on November 4 as a Blue unit performance from Cleveland was beamed in the background.

The Great Moscow Circus, produced by Steve Leber and Michael Edgley, returned stateside when it opened its tour in late July at Atlantic City's Taj Mahal Casino. The tour was to take the troupe to forty cities, but closed early at the end of the year, canceling many dates. The failure was caused by spotty business which was certainly not the result of the quality of the performance which was excellent with the Doveikos on the Russian swing, the Nugzarov horsemen, Taisia Kornilove and Alexei Dementiev with the elephants, and the fabulous Flying Cranes. Alexander "Shasha" Frish was the ringmaster.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable organizations, especially police and fire fighter groups, were a significant part of the business. Many lamented this style of sawdust because the generic title "Shrine Circus" hindered showmen from developing name recognition in the public's mind, and created the unfortunate situation where many producers competed on price rather than merit in negotiating bookings. Nevertheless, many of these shows were of high quality with first-class acts formerly under contract to Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and ma-

jor European companies. Many, if not most, performers preferred Shrine to tented dates because they generally offered better working and living conditions.

The usual mad scramble for contracts took place as temples sought new producers after beating the old ones down so much in price that they were dissatisfied with the end product. This destructive dynamic, combined with the inexorable shrinkage in Shrine membership--their ranks were down 32% from the 1979 high--bode ill for the future of this segment of the industry. Producers were well aware of the problems, and many of them explored the opportunities to work directly with the scores of arenas built in recent years which did not host Ringling-Barnum.


The George Carden International Circus dominated the Shrine business with up to four units operating simultaneously in virtually all parts of the continent. Moslem Temple in Detroit was the flagship date with other engagements including a summer run for Milwaukee's Tripoli Temple, a group of western bookings in both the United States and Canada, a string in the Canadian Maritime Provinces, and the January Michigan stands, the latter two being new bookings.

Newspaper ad for the Tarzan Zerbini Circus for its date at London, Ontario on June 17 and 18. Paul Butler collection.

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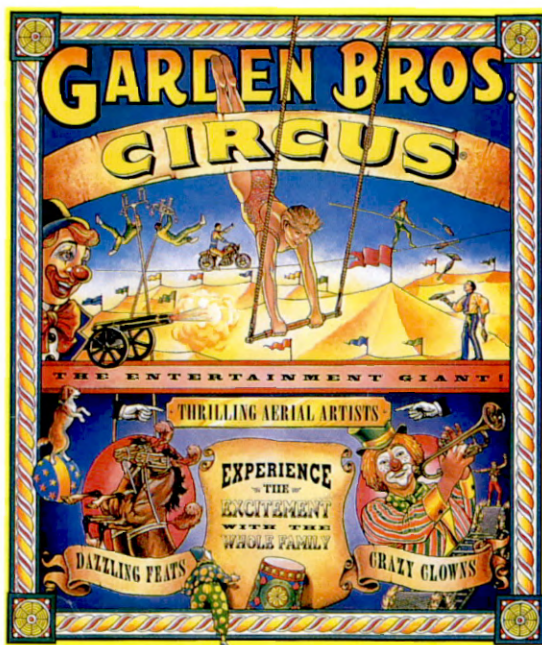
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Among the artists in Detroit, the country's oldest and most prestigious Shrine date, were Kay Rosaire with her cats, the Winn motorcycle routine, human cannonballist Sean Thomas, the King Charles comedy unicyclists, the Flying Vasquez, and Joe Frisco with the Carden elephants. Ree Schweizer was ringmistress. Talent contracted for a run of satellite dates in East Texas for Sharon Temple in late August and early September included Eddie Schmidt with his tigers, Michael and Debbie Winn on twin sway poles, Nino Murillo and Peggy Mills in a cradle act, Irene and Tony Fossett with their chimps, the Golden Aztecs living statues, Barney and Janie Loter with their comedy horse act, and the Flying Alvarados. Charles Vincent was ringmaster and the music was taped.

The Royal Hanneford Circus had two and on occasion three units out during the year, Shringing it in Cincinnati, Columbus, New Orleans, Dayton, Indianapolis, Dallas, and about thirty-five other cities. Additionally the organization appeared at major fairs and festivals such as the Ohio State Fair; Springfield, Massachusetts' Eastern States' Exposition; and Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade. On at least two occasions owners Tommy and Struppi Hanneford had to contract the Jordan International Circus to fulfill their dates. Overall it was a big year.

Among the acts at the Dallas Shrine in April were the Urias globe of death, juggler Gregory Popovich, rider Nellie Hanneford, Cat Dancers Ron and Joy Holiday, Los Mayas living statues, Bunky Boger and Joel Faulk with a bison and Texas longhorn, Les Kimes with pigs, and Carin Cristiani with elephants. Rebekah Kimes was the announcer. Gaylord Maynard's Appaloosa stallion Chief Bearpaw died in May at a veterinary hospital near Ocala, Florida after it was determined that a severe fracture could not be treated. Bearpaw was being boarded there after appearing at the Hanneford-produced Orlando Shrine Circus. Maynard debuted Chief Bearpaw III at a Hanneford show at the Perry, Georgia fair in October. Under canvas at Baraboo, Wisconsin for the Circus Fans' convention in early July, the classic Sanger Riding Academy routine was performed with George Hanneford Jr. as ringmaster, Nellie Hanneford as ballerina, and Tommy Hanneford as the stooge. It was the first time the brothers Hanneford had appeared together in thirty-five years, with the emotional moment being likened to the reunion of the Dorsey brothers.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus started the



Garden Bros. Circus program cover. Paul Butler collection.

year in Fort Wayne in February and ended it in Fort Worth in November. Both were Shrine dates. In between, it played fairs, notably Tampa's Florida State Fair in February; an amusement park in the summer; a spring Shrine run in Saskatchewan; and a summer one in Ontario, occasionally presenting two productions at once.

During the eight Saskatchewan dates for the Wa-Wa Temple in May the following talent appeared under canvas: Alan Gold with the Cuneo white tigers, comedy trampoliner Don Otto, Vicki Munoz with her dogs, Mongolian contortionists Otagon Adiya and Undarma Darihuu, the tumbling Moroccan Connection, human cannonballist Luis Munoz, and Sylvia Zerbini on single trapeze, with liberty horses, and the show's elephants. Joseph Dominic Bauer was ringmaster and performed in the wheel of death. Larry Solheim had the band.

Garden Bros. Circus played its usual route in Ontario in the spring, starting with the big date in Toronto's Skydome in early March. After a brief summer hiatus, the company played a few fairs and indoor dates in the late summer and early fall. The program at the Skydome included the Centrons' aerial motorcycle, Wilhelm Voss with the Hawthorn white tigers, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, Wade Burck with liberty horses, the Flying Belles (an all-female troupe), Davide Zoppe's monkeys, Susan Sheryll's Afghans, juggler Justino Zoppe, the Urias troupe, and thirteen Cuneo elephants. The engagement was the first in Toronto since a ban against animal exhibitions was overturned. About twenty-five animal

rights agitators dressed as sad clowns and animals protested the show.

Owner Ian Garden also had a school show called Hollywood Magic Circus on tour in the American Southeast from early October to early December, and may have also had a unit out in the spring. Ben DeWayne was manager during the fall. Others on the tour included ringmaster and magician John Kennedy Kane; the Italos, musical clowns; the Arestov family of Russian acrobats and hula hoopers; Tina Storey with dogs and on the trapeze; and Sandy Fulbright with liberty horses. Dick Garden, Ian's brother, booked a circus by the same name at a California civic center in October, and presumably elsewhere. The performance headlined juggler and hand balancer Stephen Michaels, Dan Westfall with monkeys, and marionettist Scott Land. Ed Russell, who coproduced the show with Wini McKay, executed magic.

Circus Gatti played its usual route in the Southwest and West, spending part of the summer in Canada. The program at Garden Grove, California in early April for the Shrine included the Shooting Stars on the Russian swing, the Castros on the high wire, Lance Ramos with an African elephant and with the cats, Brett Marshall with his BMX bike routine, high diver Ricky Braun, bareback riding by the Ramos and Zerbini families, the Flying Caceres, and John Pelton with the Gatti elephants. Alex Bradley was ringmaster. After the Ramos family left the show in late June, Shane Johnson joined with his tigers as a replacement. Among the newcomers to the company was performance director Lalo Murrillo who had spent a number of years with Carson and Barnes.

The Hubler International Circus had a number of sponsored dates, many of them for Shrines, around the country from February through November. In February owner George Hubler celebrated his 25th year producing the circus for the Mentor, Ohio PTA with Susan Sheryll's dogs, Davide Zoppe's monkeys, juggler Justino Zoppe, Jorge Barreda and Lou Ann Jacobs with their elephants, Bruno Blaszk with the tigers, and Felix Pages in the wheel of death. Bill Browning was bandmaster and Lucky Larabee was ringmaster.

The Jordan International Circus, sometimes called the Jordan World Circus, played a largely western route, although the company split in April with a unit going to Syracuse for a date. When the troupe played Spokane in March for the Shrine the in-ring talent included Rudy Heinin with the exotic cats, the Poema family in a risley rou-

tine, the Pages troupe on the Russian swing and in the flying return act, Gaylord Maynard with his comedy horse act, Jill Finders on the Roman rings, Los Alarcons musical clowns, and Rex Williams with the Vargas elephants. Williams' season ended when he was seriously injured in early April after one of his charges stomped him in Salt Lake City.

The Plunkett Bros. Circus had a number of Shrine bookings, some fairs, the Circus Hall of Fame route in July, and a string of Texas dates in the fall. When the show appeared for the Omaha Shrine in April the performers included Tina Winn in a slide for life, Yaro and Barbara Hoffman with their cats, Derrick Rosaire with his bears, the Winns aerial motorcycle routine, Dana and D. V. Allen with the bird, dog, and seal acts, the Flying Espanas, and Bucky Steele with his elephants. Members of the Plunkett family also performed comedy trampoline, low wire, and comedy car turns; and worked the elephant and pony acts, usually augmenting the hired talent on their own dates, and occasionally working for other producers. Veteran Diane Wilson performed for the first time since 1986 at Indianapolis during the Circus Hall of Fame run when she took over granddaughter Dana Allen's seal act while Allen took a quick trip to San Francisco to visit her fiancé.

The Hamid-Morton Circus, the most venerable of Shrine circus titles, had its usual February through June hilarity starting in Topeka and ending in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In between the company appeared in Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Connecticut, and Minnesota. A few fair dates concluded the year. Acts on the Shrine engagements included the Tino Wallenda-Zoppe family on the high wire and in a cloud swing, Kay Rosaire's cage act, Elian Rosaire and her husband Kazimierz Dymek with horse acts, clown Buck Nolan, Gordon and Vickie Howle in an aerial cradle routine and a foot juggling turn, the Flying Cortez, and Jorge Barreda and Lou Ann Jacobs with the elephants. Kristie Randall fell while doing a helicopter spin at the St. Paul Shrine in April, breaking her hip and thigh bone.

The George Coronas Circus played a number of Shrine dates and fairs, about 100 days of work in all, including major temple bookings in Chicago, St. Louis and Atlanta. At Chicago's Medinah Temple, one of the country's longest Shrine dates, the arenic personnel in-

cluded musical clown Italo Fornasari, magician Senor Rai, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, Kimberly Zerbini with her dogs, Felix Pages in the wheel of death, the King Charles comedy unicycle troupe, Bruno Blaszak with his tigers, and Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe with their chimps. Ernie McLean was the ringmaster and Rick Percy led the band.

Ed Migley's Circus America, sometimes known as Circus Odyssey, had a number of Shrine dates in the East from March to May, splitting his com-



The more things change, the more they stay the same. The Circus World Museum's Bill Machtel and Leitzel reprise the classic Lou Jacobs image of a half century ago. Paul Gutheil photo.

pany on at least one occasion. When the show appeared in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in late March the program listed Lilli Ana Kristensen with her leopards and panthers, the Bill Morris and the Cuneo elephants, human cannonball Ermas Zamperla, the Sofia troupe on the Russian swing and in comedy acrobatics, the Galambos troupe with their soccer playing dogs, Ari Steeples with his bears, and the Flying Redpaths and the Flying Valentines. David Locke was the singing ringmaster and Paul Gasper directed the band.

Circus Valentine had a handful of January dates in Texas, and summer and fall tours of the Lone Star State and Arkansas. When the show played Beaumont, Texas under Shrine auspices in late June the billing included Otto Berosini with his cats, Frances Flores in a slide for life, Linda Flores in a dressage number, Ari Steeples with his bears, Lana Steeples on the single trapeze, David Conner juggling on a unicycle, Allen Campbell with five Hawthorn African elephants, and the Flying Valentines, headed by show owner Ray Valentine. Peter Sturgis was the ringmaster and performed magic, and Bill Browning was bandmaster.

Paul Kaye's Circus International played two locations in Hawaii in August, and produced the big Evansville, Indiana Shrine circus in November. Tragedy struck in Honolulu on August 20 when the elephant Tyke went berserk before the matinee and killed handler Allen Campbell who was trying to save the life of an assistant who was being gored by the bull. After escaping from the building, the pachyderm was shot seven times before going down. She was then given a lethal injection. The incident brought the wrath of God upon the industry as the horrifying scene of the elephant crushing Campbell was captured on videotape and played endlessly on television for the next few days, often accompanied by the commentary of know-nothing animal rights advocates.

The Evansville Shrine program was one of the year's best. Among the performers were Alan Gold with fifteen Cuneo cats; Lee Stevens, fresh off of Ringling-Barnum, with his baboons; David Rosaire's dogs; Cindy Herriott with liberty horses; the head and hand balancing Pivarals; the Saucedos, BMX bikers; the Flying Redpaths; the Carrillo brothers on the high wire; and fifteen Cuneo elephants under the direction of Roy Wells. Tommy Baker was ringmaster and Jack Cervone was musical director. The date was a time of endings and beginnings as veterans Sue and Rudi Lenz and their chimps retired after the engagement, and Brian Mizer, formerly of the Flying Eagles, debuted his human cannonball routine. Evansville may have also been the swan song for Alan Gold who left the business to sell real estate in Maui.

Circus Hollywood had the Ogden and Salt Lake City Shrine contracts, among other dates, along with a number of fairs in the South, East and West. Among the personnel at a fair near San Diego in late June were Mitzi Gill in her slide for life, Robert Steele's bears, Stevena Coronas with her poodles (most of whom had been part of the late Gerard Soules' act), Ron and Mitzi Gill in an iron jaw act, and Bruce Anderson with his 100 foot high single trapeze and sway pole routines. Show owner Serge Coronas was announcer for the fifty minute presentation.

Ron Kelroy produced a circus at Rock Island, Illinois in late March before playing a string of dates for Ashland, Kentucky's El Hasa Temple. Performers on the Blue Grass state bookings included Shane Johnson with tigers, the Jasmine duo in an aerial cradle routine, Dick Kohlireser with his dogs and lib-

erty ponies, the Esqueda troupe on unicycles and teeterboards, unicyclist Tim Capp, the Geraldos on the high wire, and Bobby Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants. Don Basham was the ringmaster. The rest of the Kentucky Shrine situation was murky. Joe Albright produced the shows for the Lexington temple and its satellites, and it appeared that Ernie McLean had some bookings in the eastern part of the state.

Don Johnson's Clyde Bros. Circus had Shrine dates at Grand Forks, North Dakota in April and a two week Iowa string in June. At the Daventry Shrine the bill enumerated Shane Johnson with six tigers, Gary Sladek in a comedy trampoline routine and a cloud swing, the Flying Valentines, the Darnells with their dogs, the Posso family on the high wire and with an aerial motorcycle, Linda Hermann with her high school horse, and Bobby Gibbs with the Johnson elephants. Gibbs was also the announcer which must have been like watching Rembrandt paint.

Wayne McCary produced the Shrine circus in Manchester, New Hampshire and in a number of hamlets in Maine from early April to early May. Among those on this tour were Andre Skarbecki with his lions; Dana Kaseeva with hula hoops; Carlos and Susanna Svenson in both comedy and classic riding; David Rosaire with his dogs and baboon; the Flying Cortez; the Hernandez duo with whips, ropes and bolos; and Bill Morris with his elephants. Charlie Van Buskirk was the ringmaster, and Fred Petra was in charge of a five piece band. Circus producing was a second job for McCary who spent most of his year as director of Springfield, Massachusetts' Eastern States Exposition, New England's biggest fair.

Circuses were a common sight at fairs and festivals, usually as free attractions booked by carnivals or by the fairs themselves. With a few exceptions these were small affairs, usually one ringers giving about an hour's worth of entertainment either under canvas or in front of grandstands. While a number of indoor producers appeared at fairs during the slack Shrine months, a few other showmen specialized in this brand of tanbark.

The Liebel Family Circus rock and rolled from January to November at Southern and Midwestern fairs under a single ring big top. As the title implied, the show was a family affair as owner Tomi Liebel was the ringmaster, clown, one man band, and juggler; son Tony rola bolaed and worked the elephants, and wife Franchezca presented the liberty ponies. Other actors at various

times during the year included Ken Taylor who foot juggled and performed on the single trapeze, wire walker Valentino, and J. P. Theron who jumped into a giant sponge.

The Happytime Circus opened in Los Angeles in late February and worked



One of the smallest circuses extant was Tim Tegge's Circus Clown Revue, shown here at the Buffalo County Fair in Mondovi, Wisconsin on August 5. Tim Tegge photo.

through November, mostly at California fairs, although the Alaska State Fair was on the route card. Under an 80 foot by 50 foot single ring big top, owner Dave Twomey clowned, ringmastered and presented a dog act, Kenny Twomey juggled, and Darrell Hawkins spun rope and did an unsupported ladder routine. Swan Bros. Circus, another California-based fair and festival show, appeared in the Golden State and Nevada from January through at least August. Brothers Andy and Mike Swan, the proprietors, put on the entire show which consisted of juggling, rola bola, dogs, a trapeze act, and clown numbers under a tiny one ring canvas holding about 350 people.

Circus Continental, produced by Peggy Klein, presented grandstand circuses at a number Midwestern and Border state fairs. At the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville in August the talent included Bob Steele's bears, Kathy Garcia's dogs, the LeMoines with their aerial motorcycle, the Sophia troupe on the Russian swing, the Garcias in a cradle act, and high diver Splash Austin. Rick Allen was ringmaster. Circo de Espectacular Garcia was booked by eighteen fairs, some for the complete circus and others for the family's thrill acts. When not working midways the show had sponsored dates, some for organizations in Spanish speaking communities. The route lasted from February to November and took the show through the Southwest, South, Midwest and East. When the company played Mesquite, Texas in early April under a big top the performers included Zoe Henry with dogs, and David Conner with his unicycle and rola bola routines. Garcia fam-

ily members worked comedy trampoline, the flying return act, and a globe of death, with owner Jaime Garcia appearing in the wheel of death.

The Russell Bros. Family Fun Circus was a new name on the fair circuit, using a 60 foot by 40 foot big top seating 400 which took about five hours to set up. Moving on two trucks pulling trailers the three or four person company played California fairs on and off from early May to late August. Steven Michaels, a co-owner, juggled in the performance while Ed Russell, the other principal, worked birds and rabbits. Prof. Tegge's Circus, also called Prof. Tegge's Circus Clown Revue at some dates, played fairs in Michigan and Wisconsin, the

Felix Alder Days festival in Iowa, and a number of shopping malls from July to September. When it appeared at malls the 30-40 minute open air production went three times a day. Owned by Tim Tegge, the performance included wife GiGi who demonstrated illusions and rope spinning.

Circus Sahara appeared at a number of eastern fairs. Among the talent were Vicki and Gordon Howle in their aerial cradle routine, and owner Dorian Blake who performed illusions. Arthur Duchek produced an under-canvas circus at the Meadowlands Fair and Exposition in East Rutherford, New Jersey from June 17 to July 10. The billing included Les Kimes with his pigs, the Galambos troupe on the spring board and with their soccer playing dogs, and Duchek and his wife in a comedy high wire act. The Star Spangled Circus was at the Deerfield, New Hampshire fair in early October with Roverta Winn in a slide for life, Frank and Carol Galambos in a cradle routine, and the Winn family's aerial motorcycle. Producer Dwight Damon, who spent most of the year as an agent, was the ringmaster. The Carla Wallenda Thrill Circus played fairs in the Midwest, East and South.

Jorge Barreda had a circus at the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson in early October. The performers included clowns Billy Barton and Bobby Davis, Lou Ann Jacobs with elephants, human cannonball Athos Zamperla, and the Flying Pages. Richard Johnson was ringmaster and Wanda Darlington was bandmistress. The Golden Liberty Circus appeared at a number of small fairs, festivals and company picnics in the Midwest. Framed by Jim Dillon, the performance featured his family in a number of routines including wire walking and rola bola as well as cat trainer Baron Julius Von Uhl.

The Frisco-Morton Circus debuted in mid-March at the Sarasota County fair

under an old Kelly Miller big top. The in-ring personnel included Lou Rossell with her leopards, Adolf Ponce on the low wire, co-owner Jorge Rossell's comedy car, and Terry Frisco with two African elephants. Jorge Rossell Jr. was ringmaster and the music was taped. Joe Frisco, the other owner, also had elephant rides, pony rides, a petting zoo, and a snake pit show at the fair. The Victor Flores Family Circus entertained fairgoers in the South and Canada. The Flores family put on the entire show which included a globe of death act, a high wire motorcycle routine, a single trapeze presentation and a dog display.

Yaro and Barbara Hoffman had their Happy Cats Big Cat Revue at Florida and New York fairs, and perhaps others. The performance entailed a cage act along with commentary on endangered exotic cats. Ex-Vargas lion trainer Wayne Regan had a similar show called the Lion's Den at fairs in which he explained his training techniques by use of a wireless microphone while inside the cage. Andre Skarbecki's Lions of the Serengeti show was another feline attraction at fairs and festivals. Bill Carpenter had multiple units of his Backyard Circus at fairs, including the big Ohio State and Texas State Fairs. This micro production used kids from the audience in the performance.

Petting zoos, the remnants of the great traveling animal exhibitions of the early 19th century, were a fixture on fairgrounds, offering a combination of exotic and domesticated animals to elephants and camels to goats and sheep. Among the companies on tour were Dave Hale's which appeared at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade and Joe Hendrick's which exhibited at the Texas State Fair. The leader of the genre was Bob Commerford who had his aggregation at the Ohio State Fair, the Eastern States Exposition, and a number of lesser fairs.

Other circus-related activities on fair grounds included Don Moyer's Reptile Safari which displayed at twenty fairs. Additionally, many aerial and thrill acts worked as single attractions on midways. The great tradition of the side show lived on, but just barely, as only a handful of ten-in-ones continued to troop. Best known was Ward Hall's extravaganza which played a number of fairs.

A bevy of small, mostly one ring, circuses performed indoors. While a few of these companies were on the cutting

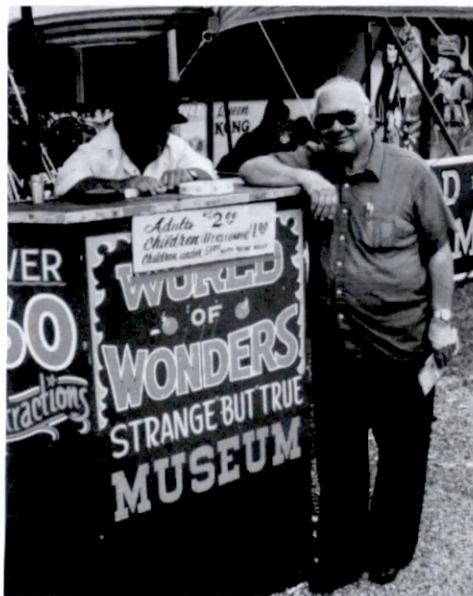


The two Circus Pages elephants. Bill Rhodes photo.

edge of the business, most offered traditional fare and functioned as fund raising vehicles for charities such as PTAs and veterans' groups which were unable to contract larger circuses. Frequently selling their tickets over the telephone, these troupes were usually called "school shows" within the trade because of their propensity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms. These aggregations usually trekked during the early and late months of the year, and generally played smaller communities, servicing the towns that saw tiny wagon shows a century ago.

The Royal Palace Circus, one of the most successful and established school shows, performed through the Midwest, East and South from at least March to October. This compactly framed trick moved on two show-owned vehicles and carried seating for up to 1000.

Ward Hall (r.) was one of the last of the true sideshow operators. He is shown here with Pete Terhune at the Sussex County, New Jersey Fair in August. Paul Gutheil photo.



Among the talent was owner Harry Dubsky Sr. who worked a black panther and a small leopard and ringmastered, and his son Harry Jr. who performed magic and an excellent hand balancing routine. Other actors included Linda Hermann with her dressage horse, the Murillo family in tumbling and rolling globe routines, and aerialist Stephanie Chapman.

Ron Bacon's Famous Cole Circus, called Magic Holiday Fantasy in some towns, hurried through the Ohio River Valley from March to May and from October to December. Among the sawdust stars on the spring bookings were Irvin Hall with comedy juggling and baboons, Margaret Valencia with poodles, the Bruski in a unicycle routine, and foot juggler Pedro Morales. Barry Yiengst was ringmaster and performed illusions, the typical combination on shows this size. Personnel on the fall route was nearly identical.

The American Showtime Circus, owned by Jim Reeder and managed by Stu Miller, had seventeen weeks of bliss during the spring and summer in Florida, Alabama and Florida. The fall dates consumed another fourteen weeks in the Southeast. On this run the performers included Sara Miller with uncaged leopards, Carl Reed with his dogs and ponies, and aerialist Wendy Drougett. The Yankee Doodle Circus had successful spring and fall engagements in the East. Amazing audiences in April were Russian juggler and rola bolaist Victor Dodonov, plate spinner and dog trainer Gary Noel, and contortionist Dora Bautista. Owner Mike Naughton teamed with Barry Lubin to do a terrific parody ventriloquism number. Lubin also appeared as Grandma the clown.

Circus Pages appeared in at least the Midwest, Plains and West, spending several weeks as a second unit for the Johnny Jordan Circus. When the company played an armory in Richmond, Indiana in March the displays included Sabrina Hermann with her long rein horse, Kim Pages with her dogs, the Posso troupe on the teeterboard, and James Earhardt who performed illusions and announced. Owner Jorge Pages worked the cat act, and assisted with the elephant routine. Ray McMahon's Royal American Circus worked about thirty weeks in the South and Midwest. When the troupe entertained the burghers of Mt. Vernon, Illinois in March, the actors included Vlastek Bertini on the trampoline, clown Charles Wark, juggler Jose Torres, the Bertini family

on unicycles, and Bill Brickle with his poodles.

Cathy Rogers had a big year, taking over a number of spots formerly booked by the John Strong organization. Using titles such as Wonderful World of Magic, Children Variety Show, and Santa's Christmas Show, she had troupes in most parts of the continent with five Christmas shows going simultaneously. Among the kinkers earning paychecks on a Santa unit that came through Ohio were juggler Bob Whitcomb and clown Billy Vaughn. Frank Clark was show manager. The John Strong Circus, headed by the founder's widow Gundrun Strong, apparently had a few dates, although their existence didn't make it into the pages of any of the industry's trade publications.

The Cole All Star Circus perambulated in New York state from January to March and from October to December, often playing towns along the old Erie Canal. On the early year tour the billing included illusionists Bobby Fairchild and Lauren Chandler, aerialist Tracey Bannister, clown Paul Abra, low wire walker Demille Goetchi, bird trainer Susan Vidbel, juggler Zachery Goetchi, and trapezist Angela Martin. Owner Billy Martin was ringmaster.

The Wonderland Circus marched through South Carolina for most of January with George Bertini on the unicycle and low wire; Oscar and Kathy Garcia in juggling, aerial and casting routines; and clown Derek Dye. Owner Bill Brickle was the ringmaster and presented his poodles.

Jose Cole had his International Circus in the upper Midwest from mid-March to mid-June with a week off around Memorial Day. The troupe appeared at a variety of venues, gyms, auditoriums, hockey rinks, and even outdoors, an indication of the flexibility necessary in this type of circus. Acts included Kathy Garcia with dogs, Marjina Castro and Kathie Hoyer on web, Tom Demry with his mixed animal routine and with Anna Louise the elephant, George Castro on the high wire, clown GiGi Tegge, Connie Welde with her uncaged leopards, and Oscar Garcia in the wheel of death. Gary Holvek was ringmaster and performed magic. When he left at mid-trek, Tim Tegge took over those chores.

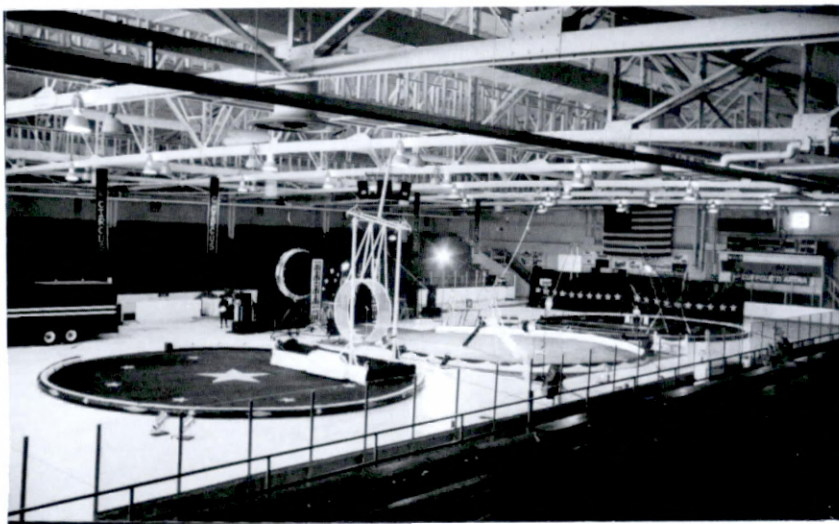
The Star Circus made a Southern swing in the spring and a Midwestern one in the fall. The pro-



The Bill Morris elephants, shown here in October on the Great Wallenda Circus in Brooklyn, was one of many independent elephant acts. Paul Guthell collection.

gram at Ruston, Louisiana in early Marchread: Aneli Esqueda Cristiani with a sword balancing turn and a trapeze routine, Gary Sladek in a chair balancing exhibition and a cloud swing, and juggler Armando Cristiani. Owner Byron Bowman filled out the hour and twenty minute display with magic and a high school horse act. Sid Kellner had a six town, six day fall run in California's Bay Area. Among the tanbark luminaries were clown Larry Pisoni, Dan

One of the bigger school shows was Jose Cole's International Circus, shown here at the Miners Memorial Building in Virginia, Minnesota on May 22. Tim Tegge photo.



Westfall with Jeeter the chimp, Arturo and Kay Castrejon in the wheel of death and an aerial cradle routine, foot juggler Chester Cable, and the Flying Redpaths. Charlie Hackett was ringmistress.

Downie Bros. Circus returned to the active duty roster for the first time since 1939 when Bradd and Jeanette Tompkins used the title on about a dozen December dates in Connecticut school gyms. In keeping with the festive season, the ninety minute performance used Christmas decorations as a backdrop to the ring. Among the entertainers was Gracie Hanneford who displayed her birds and dogs. The Holiday Magic Circus, a typical name for the genre, was in New England late in the year. Performers included Kenny Sherburne who rode a unicycle while juggling, plate spinner Roger DuBois, and the aforementioned Gracie Hanneford. Owner James LaDini was ringmaster and did magic.

The Indoor Circus Spectacular appeared in Tennessee and North Carolina from October 7 to 19. Co-owned by Dean Della Loggia and Barry Yiengst, the exhibition featured Susan Sheryll with her dogs, Kim Sue Wong on the single trapeze, George Bertini on the unicycle and the low wire, juggler Justino Zoppe, and Davide Zoppe with his monkeys. Dan McCallum was the ringmaster. Yiengst also had his Magic Circus at fairs and festivals during the summer. Ron Morris had his Olde Tyme Family Circus in New England during the hot months with the Zacherys in a gaucho number, the Dunderdales on the rola bola and in knockabout comedy, jugglers Pedro and Myrna Murillo, and Tom Demry with Anna Louise the elephant.

The Joy The Clown Circus had a three week run in the South and Southwest at year's end and about five other mini-routes earlier. Troupers on the Christmas tour were the Hansen family

in juggling and roller skating displays, rola bolista Tony Liebel, and the Bruskis in their unicycle routine. Charlie Hackett was ringmistress and Kay Parker had the band. Producer Joy T. Clown was the clown, which is hardly a scoop. The Reynolds Family Circus, also called the Reynolds Family Showcase Theater, had three month-long runs, one each in the spring, summer and fall, all in the Midwest. Among the performers on the Mt. Vernon, Il-

linois based show were clowns Bob and Mariah Bones who appeared as Skin and Bones. The infamous Peanut Circus, the most borderline qualifier for this compendium, was a one man circus-oriented sales pitch for the peanut industry which appeared around the country.

The New Pickle Circus defied classification, being of school show size but playing more upscale venues with higher production values than its brethren. Revived after declaring bankruptcy in 1993, the non-profit put on one of its most impressive shows in years with a display of circus skills that went beyond juggling, the troupe's signature art in the past. Conceived by Tandy Beal, the new production featured a movie motif. Dates in the East, Midwest, Southwest and even Japan came before the usual Christmas run in the show's home town of San Francisco.

Marc Verreault's Super Cirque, also known as Universal Circus, played one day stands in buildings in Ontario and Quebec from late April to early June. Among the talent were Shane Johnson with six tigers, aerialists Ron and Chris Pace, Dave Knoderer with his high school horse, Marie France with her dogs, the Wainwrights in their living statue routine, chair balancer Gary Sladeck, and Rosa and Bobby Gibbs with the elephants. Pierre Jean was the ring-master. Grosses on Gary Lashinsky's touring Royal Lipizzaner Stallion Show were up seven percent from 1993. This company also had a unit in Las Vegas' Excalibur Casino.

Circo Zoppe Europa, a new wave show combining elements of Broadway and Sarasota, appeared at Midwestern arts centers, often on college campuses, for about a month at calendar's end. The performance, entitled Buon Natale, revolved around two children finding a mysterious circus trunk on Christmas Eve. Cast members included Tosca Zoppe with her horse, comedy aerialist Giovanni Zoppe, Tino Wallenda-Zoppe on the high wire, the hand balancing Pivarals, and Brett Bronson with his elephant. The announcer was Carlos Gaste-Lum in his first circus engagement. A stage actor, he had been the lead in the Mexico City production of *Phantom of the Opera*. Circus Oz, the absurdist circus from Australia, returned to these shores after a few years hiatus when it played Washington, D. C.'s Kennedy Center as part of an Australian festival in October. A production that pushed the envelope, its motto was "If you like Cirque du Soleil, you'll love Circus Oz."

The non-profit Make A Circus appeared in parks, recreation centers and auditoriums in California from June to



The theme of the Circo Zoppe Europa was Buon Natale. Sandy Zoppe collection.

October. Founded by Peter Frankham, the show incorporated a story line with an uplifting message for inner city kids. The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow, a bizarre and often gross parody of traditional ten-in-ones, was one of the opening acts for the alternative industrial band Nine Inch Nails when it toured arenas. The Circus Mirabilis, said by a critic to be a cross between Jim Rose and Cirque du Soleil, was at San Francisco's Victoria Theater in October.

Circuses and circus acts were popular diversions at amusement and theme parks, resort areas, flea markets, and renaissance fairs. Baraboo, Wisconsin's Circus World Museum had a strong performance headed by the Mark Karoly comedy riding act. Others in the program included the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, the hand balancing Pivarals, juggler T. J. Howell, Kathy Hayes with a dressage horse, clowns Bill Machtel and Jim Williams, hula hooper Natasha Rodriguez, and Chip and Diane Arthurs with the Vargas elephants. David SaLoutos was ringmaster and Rick Percy directed the band.

"Century of Spectacle," a major new exhibit, opened in the Feld Building in May. The museum's library was officially dedicated as the Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center in July. The fabulous Royal American Shows band organ was put on display in June. The Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee

was its usual huge success as the show grounds featured the Royal Hanneford Circus, a horse training display by John Herriott, and the Horse Fair, a wonderful recreation of the one on Barnum and Bailey in the 1890s. The restored Cinderella carriage from Ringling-Barnum, and Ringling cage #60 were highlights of the Milwaukee march.

Circus acts were very popular at more traditional parks. Great Escape amusement park in Lake George, New York offered a circus performance which included Ivo and Neli Gueorguiev in their hand balancing and Roman rings routines, the Flying Cortez, Bill Morris with his bulls, and the Urias troupe with their globe of death. The Enchanted Forest park in Old Forge, New York employed the Delilah Wallenda high wire troupe and Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi. Jorge Barreda and Lou Ann Jacobs had their elephants, and John Welde his bears at New York's Catskill Game Farm. End of an Era Department: David Tetzlaff shut down Jungle Larry's African Safari after thirty years at Sandusky, Ohio's great Cedar Point Amusement Park where he and his father Larry Tetzlaff broke in a number of animal trainers.

EuroCircus: The Russian Fantasy ap-

Courier used by the New Pickle Circus for its November and December engagements in Santa Cruz and San Francisco. Courtesy New Pickle Circus.



peared at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina during the summer. The company consisted of 45 performers from Russia and the Ukraine who did acrobatic routines, aerial numbers, juggling, teeterboard, and hula hoops. The show was produced by Bob Maxwell of Orlando, and managed by Martin Durham. Something called Doc Swan's Vaudeville Circus was at Virginia Beach, Virginia in early September as part of the American Music Festival. The Nerveless Nocks were again engaged at Tommy Bartlett's in the Wisconsin Dells.

George and Vicki Hanneford produced the circus at the Thunderbird Swap Shop in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, changing the talent throughout the year. Comedy juggler Bob Welz, and the Ayak brothers on the trapeze were among the many performers who cashed pay checks from this one. Sister and brother Catherine and George Hanneford III worked elephants and horses year round. John Strong Jr. produced a circus for a California swap meet in May, after producing a show for the L'oreal Cosmetic Company a month earlier in the same state. Renaissance fairs hired many showfolks such as Junkyard Johnny Meah who ate fire and swallowed swords at one such event in Massachusetts.

The spot date, the creation of a circus for a very short period, often at one location for one or two performances, was an under-reported and under-documented segment of the industry. Without doubt some of these shows

Big top performers at Circus World Museum on September 5, closing day. Tim Tegge photo.

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Newspaper ad for David Mobbs' Circus USA which appeared in the Miami area in October. Arnold Brito collection.

were produced by well-known names in the business using different titles or whose connection was not explicit. While these ventures were not a significant part of the landscape, a few were major undertakings and all exemplified the remarkably fluid nature of the business as these operas were literally here today and gone tomorrow.

Frank Curry's Ronald McDonald Circus was a big time spot date in Nashville. Held over a weekend in early February, this extravaganza featured Bruno Blaszak with his tigers, Bertalina Nikolski on the high wire, Les Kimes with his pigs, the Nocks with their wheel of death and sway poles, the Alberto Zoppe riding act, the Flying Gaonas, and a Cuneo elephant act. David

vid Mobbs' Circus USA played three locations in the Miami area under canvas in October. Among the performers was wire walker Luis Montalvo.

The vast majority of spot date circuses were much smaller affairs. Mark M. Osborne produced a circus, blandly called Acrobatic Show, for the parks department in Elkhart, Indiana in June. The Nock Family Circus appeared at an enclosed shopping mall near Birmingham, Alabama in February. Heidi Herriott was ringmistress on this one. Carl Reed and Whitey Black had their Circus Tray at two towns in Florida in November. Members of this company included Bobby Fairchild who ringmastered and threw knives, Patti Reed with liberty horses, Neli and Ivo Gueorguiev on Roman rings, and Lauren Fairchild on web.

Other spot dates included Circus Reno International, a three ring ball park venture produced by Jerry D. Sokolosky, which used five of John Cuneo's Asian elephants and the roller skating Hansen family in its September performances in Oklahoma. The American International Circus, produced by Dick McCarthy, was in Nashville in late August with hand balancer and Roman ringer Wendy Bell. Bill Birchfield produced a circus for the Jaycees in Kissimmee, Florida in February. Tom Shary had T. J.'s Circus at Lancaster, Pennsylvania in September. Circo Osorio, headed by the Osorio brothers, was in Reno, Nevada for a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Larry Gagnon and Hub Hubbell, both in their seventies, produced a wild west show in Newbury, Florida in the fall. The KARE Youth League Circus and Carnival in Pasadena, California had a strong performance with the acrobatic Vitas family, wire walker Karl Winn, sword swallower Brad Byers, Debbie Winn in a slide for life, Tahar with his alligators, and Tony Blanco with magic and as ringmaster. A circus in Detroit in mid-June featured the John Cuneo elephants and Lilli Ana Kristensen with her leopards. A circus in Trinidad folded early after a short run in September. Among the personnel was Susan Lacy with the John Cuneo exotic cats. Ron Morris had the concessions. Bruno Loyol had his Magic Circus of Samoa in the Fiji Islands and Tonga late in the year.

Chuck Burnes put together a circus for a convention in New Orleans that showcased Eddie Steeples with his chimps, Sylvan Steeples with her birds, Joanne Wilson with her dogs, Carol Waltens on the rola bola, and Willy Waltens in a hand balancing routine. Wini McKay produced a circus for a corporation in San Diego during the summer, hiring foot juggler Chester Cable,



unicyclist Kip Reynolds, the acrobatic Vitas family, and Darlene Williams on the Spanish web. Larry Records had his Circus Fusco at Syracuse at year's end with Billy Martin as ringmaster and Winn Murrah as the band. Something called the Popinpooh Circus, and we are not making this up, was in Lutz, Florida on August 18.

The youth circus flourished, providing fun and entry level opportunities in the industry to children and adolescents. Because of the lack of circus schools in America equal to those in Europe, these circuses functioned as something of a proving ground for new talent. An impressive number of professionals first became enamored with the business on one of the many youth shows or camps. Sarasota High School's renowned Sailor Circus, which gave exhibitions in late March and early April, was the oldest of the high school shows. Director Bill Lee retired after 35 years in June during which time he introduced about 3,600 students to circus skills and saw about 120 become professionals.

Another old timer in the kid business was Washington state's Wenatchee Youth Circus which started in 1954. Headed by Paul Pugh, the show opened it on and off from early June to late August with performers ranging in age from three to nineteen. The third long-running youth show was Peru Indiana's awkwardly titled Circus City Festival Circus which hurried for the 35th time in July. Oldest of them all was Illinois State University's Gamma Phi Circus which gave its 63rd annual exhibition in April.

Other youth circuses included the Great All American Youth Circus in Redlands, California, and the Flying High Circus from Florida State University, the latter exhibiting at Georgia's Callaway Gardens for the 30th consecutive year under a 150 foot round top tent with three 40 foot middle pieces. Ed Sheehan's Windy City Circus Troupe was in Chicago. Bruce Pfeiffer's Circus of the Kids worked with physical education departments to train students in circus techniques. The staff of this one included four 1994 graduates of Clown College.

Children up to the age of nineteen learned circus skills at Circus Smirkus, a camp founded by Rob Mermin in Greensboro, Vermont. After the lessons, some of which were taught by veterans of Denmark's Circus Benneweis and the Moscow Circus, the campers took the show on the road for a 54 performance under canvas tour of New England which ended in late August. The husband and wife team of Michael Killian and Jessica Hentoff directed a circus camp at Berkshire Community College

in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in August, calling it the Berkshire Kids Circus when it appeared before the public. The Fern Street Circus, founded by John Highkin, taught children about self esteem and confidence through performing. The 30 to 40 kids in the program put on a circus during the summer in San Diego's famed Balboa Park and in April a number of them appeared in the Circus Vargas performance as part of a fund raising campaign.

A number of benefit performances were conducted by generous showfolk. Gibsonton, Florida's Showman's Circus raised money for local charities in February under Serge Corornas' big top.



Poster for play *The Great Farini*. at Peterborough, Ontario in July and August. The production was based on an article by Shane Peacock originally appearing in *Bandwagon*.

George Hubler produced the Showfolks of Sarasota Circus in December. Catwoman Kay Rosaire, hula hooper Dana Kaseeva, and the Urias troupe in a globe were among the participants. Many local show people appeared in the tenth annual Sarasota Circus Festival at year's end.

Many circus performers earned at least part of their livelihood at sport shows, ice shows, trade shows, dinner theaters, cruise ships, and even car dealerships. Nevada and New Jersey casino showrooms provided a large number of jobs. Circus Circus Casino in Reno, for example, presented the Flying

Eagles, Eric Adams with his dogs, the Osorio brothers on the high wire, and a troupe of Chinese acrobats. Among the many showfolks employed in Las Vegas were the Flying Caballeros at Circus Circus, and juggler Wally Eastwood in the Splash show at the Riviera. Dick Kohlrieser and his dogs worked in the *Will Rogers Follies* at Branson, Missouri during the summer. Baron Julius Von Uhl worked his cage act along with a few other turns for Ford dealers in the Chicago area and elsewhere.

Among the participants in the Monte Carlo Festival at the beginning of the year was Joseph Dominic Bauer with his wheel of death. Also appearing at Monte Carlo were Russian and Cuban performers with Cirque du Soleil. In December, the Circus of the Stars television show demeaned the profession for the nineteenth consecutive year by once again perpetuating the perception that second-tier movie and television personalities could become competent circus artists after a few weeks practice.

Peru's Circus Hall of Fame inducted clown Emmett Kelly, 19th century proprietor John Robinson, and the riding Cristiani family. Delavan, Wisconsin's Clown Hall of Fame took in Bumpsy Anthony, Joe Jackson Sr., Annie Fratellini, Jim Howle and Nicolai "Coco" Polakova. Honorees at Sarasota's Ring of Fame were clown Dan Rice, wire walker and producer Hubert Castle, owner and promoter Allan C. Hill and inventor William H. "Cap" Curtis. Barbara and Buckles Woodcock were honored as Sarasota Circus Celebrities for 1994 at the Ringling Museum in January. On December 27 approximately 70 elephant owners and handlers met in Sarasota to form the Elephant Managers Association and to plan strategies to combat animal rightists. It was biggest gathering of pachyderm brains in history except when Cheerful Gardner dined alone.

Dueling Clowns: Felix Adler Days was held in Clinton, Iowa in August while Emmett Kelly Jr. Days was held in Tombstone, Arizona in November. Guthrie, Oklahoma hosted the Tom Mix Festival in September. The Clowns of America met in Portland in April, and the University of Virginia sponsored a week of seminars on clowning, with luminaries Barry Lubin, David Larible, Steve Smith and Dick Monday as speakers. At its annual meeting in Atlanta, the prestigious Organization of American Historians included sessions on P. T. Barnum and one entitled "The Big Top as Cultural Microcosm: Race, Foreign Policy and New Deal Nationalism."

The Great Farini, a play based on the life of the fabulous showman George Farini, appeared in Peterborough, Ontario in July and August starring Soleil vet-

eran Nicky Dewhurst in the title role. "With the Greatest of Ease," an exhibit on Bloomington, Illinois' flying trapeze heritage was shown at a local museum from July to October. The Hartford, Connecticut fire chief unveiled a plaque commemorating the 50th anniversary of the terrible Ringling-Barnum fire at the elementary school now located at the site of the conflagration. Wild west show stars Annie Oakley and Bill Pickett achieved the American equivalent of sainthood when they were depicted on postage stamps.

Blast from the Past Department, Part 1: Circus Kirk personnel held a reunion in Baraboo in September. Part 2: Gainesville Community Circus personnel held a reunion in their namesake Texas town in October. Circus fans Tom and Eleanor Armstrong celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in July by producing their own circus for 600 friends in Jacksonville, Illinois. Performers included wire walkers Carla Wallenda and Mike Morgan, juggler Dieter Tasso, Doug Terranova with an elephant and the Wainwrights' living statues.

As an April Fool's Day joke a Dallas radio station reported that the Amazing Bulgarian Cat Circus was in town featuring 100 felines parachuting from a helicopter. The SPCA was not amused. Where Are They Now Department: Seen in photos of Michael Jackson and bride Lisa Marie Presley from Budapest was Michu, famed Ringling-Barnum midget in the 1970s.

Book Watch Department: It was another good year on the literary front as a number of new volumes added to the knowledge of the circus. Among them were biographies of Annie Oakley, and the Vazquez family; memoirs by cat trainer David Tetzlaff, fan Paul Horsman, and clown Frank Cain; a revision of Steve Gossard's history of trapeze acts; and William Slout's edition Col. T. Allston Brown's history of amphitheaters and circuses, originally published in the *New York Clipper* in 1860 and 1861. Jim Judkins once again edited a fine route book for Carson and Barnes. The Kelly-Miller Circus also issued a route book. The unanimous winner of the Antony Hippisley Coxe award for the year's best circus book was Diana Starr Cooper's *Night After Night*, a penetrating analysis of the Big Apple Circus and a remarkably sophisticated defense of the use of animals in circuses.

As is the nature of things, many fine members of the circus community de-



The death of Allen Campbell, shown here at the Hawthorn Circus Corporation winter quarters in January, was one of the most tragic events of the year. Sheelagh Jones photo.

parted this life in 1994. Among them were: Edwin Trevor Bale, trainer and showman; Betty Bell, former flyer and co-founder of the Ward Bell Circus; Art Branning, retired Beatty-Cole executive; Max Butler, costume designer; Allen Campbell, elephant trainer; Robert Cline, elephant man on Beatty-Cole and King Bros. circuses; Ceslee Conkling, Ringling-Barnum clown; Evelyn Joyce Cook, former Ringling-Barnum equestrienne and widow of fixer Frank Cook; George Da Deppo, artist; Maria Dubsky, retired performer; Dorothy Durbin, retired Ringling-Barnum flyer; John David Epperly, musician; Murray Fien, doyen of bug men; Fred Fried, historian; Franz Furtner aka Unus, superlative performer; Raymond "Red" Gates, concessionaire extraordinaire; Marv Gauger, retired Circus World Museum wagon master; Tosca Canestrelli Gesmundo, retired performer; Walter Graybeal, retired flyer; Billy Griffin, old time clown and staffer; Billy Gunga, showman; L. David Harris, founder of Circus Kingdom; Dorothy Herbert, great equestrienne and sex symbol to a generation; Bill Kay, plate spinner; Marji Langin, advance clown for Roberts Bros. Circus; Ed Lester, former Ringling-Barnum and Royal American train crew prodigy; Ora Logan, wardrobe mistress for the Beatty-Cole Circus and wife of Fred Logan; Raymond "Sabu" Moreau, elephant expert; Lloyd Morgan, Jr., former Ringling-Barnum executive; Ann Pike, marketing director for Walker Bros. Circus; Peggy Day Porter, aerialist and wardrobe mistress; Billy Powell, wire walker; Viley Priest, retired ringmaster; Johnny Rivers, king of the diving mules; Dorothy Rubens, widow of Bud Anderson and Si Rubens; Ted Svertesky, Ringling-Barnum elephant boss; Charles Stevenson, former Carson and Barnes band leader; Estrella Terrell Sims, wid-

ow of legend Zack Terrell; and Melzer "Buster" Thomas, flyer.

This compilation, for all its errors of commission and omission, would be far less comprehensive were it not for thoughtfulness of many strangers and friends who generously sent me an unending stream of information. This overview's merits are in large measure the result of their generosity. This year's heroes are: Ron Bacon, Jim Baker, Tina Bausch, Bill Biggerstaff, Joe Bradbury, Arnold Brito, Paul Butler, Jerry Cash, Pete Cash, Herb Clement, James Cole, Don Covington, Cam

Cridlebaugh, Fred Dahlinger, Hank Fraser, Paul Gutheil, Ray Gronso, Deborah Haney, Charles Hanson, Burt Harwood, Paul Holley, Al House, Pat Inskoop, Don James, Sheelagh Jones, Doug Lyon, Frank Mara, Mike Martin, John McConnell, Dan McGinnis, Bill Millsap, David Orr, Greg Parkinson, Kathleen Petree, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Fred D. Pfening IV, J. Scott Pyles, Richard J. Reynolds III, Bill Rhodes, Frank Robie, Ron Sanford, Bill Schreiber, Karen Severson, Ed Sheehan, Lucie Simard, Mike Sporrer, Al Stencell, LeRoy Sweetland, Tim Tegge, Frank Thompson, Bradd Tompkins, Gordon Taylor, Gordon Turner, Bill Whitney, Dale Williams, Bill Woodcock, and Sandy Zoppe. Special thanks to Bobby Gibbs who always goes beyond the call of duty. My apologies if I have missed anyone. As always, *Circus Report*, ably edited by Don Marks, the late twentieth century's answer to Warren Patrick, was indispensable. *Amusement Business*, *Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter*, *White Tops*, and cuttings from scores of newspapers were also useful.

1995 CHS CONVENTION

CHS President Fred Dahlinger has announced that the 1995 Circus Historical Society convention will be held in San Antonio, Texas on October 18-21. In addition to member's papers on a variety of circus subjects, registrants will be treated to special tours and exhibitions of rare circus materials in the Hertzberg Circus Museum. Hertzberg administrator Bob O'Connor and his staff are excited to host the first CHS visit to the well known collection.

The convention schedule will also include a visitation to the Al Zagar Temple Shrine Circus. Please mark your calendars for the convention and plan to attend. Members wishing to present papers should contact President Dahlinger at their earliest convenience. Further details will be announced in the May-June *Bandwagon*.

Foreword

The late C. Deniston Berkery, well known for the wonderful circus movies he distributed for thirty years, spent a lifetime connected with movie houses and was an ace projectionist. However, he had two stints in outdoor show business. As a young boy he joined Tompkins Real Wild West Show, a medium overland outfit owned by Charles H. Tompkins, Dr. Henry W. Turner, and Al F. Wheeler, which toured from 1913 to 1917. Berkery's family was friends of Wheeler's and gave parental authority to travel with the show.

When Wheeler and Almond framed a new motorized circus in 1930 Berkery was invited to join. He planned to write an article on the show himself. Unfortunately, he never got around to it. He inspired this review of the 1930 Wheeler circus.

The 1930 Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows was organized in the winter of 1929-30 by two well known and experienced showmen, Al F. Wheeler and Jethro Almond. Wheeler was 48 and Almond 13 years older.

Al F. Wheeler was born in Troy, New York, in 1882. He joined Charles Lee's Great London Shows in 1901. In 1904 he operated an overland circus titled Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows which continued through the 1910 season. His route covered the Northeast, concentrating in New York and Pennsylvania. He later moved his home and quarters to Oxford, Pennsylvania.

For three seasons, 1911-1913 he was a partner with Andrew Downie, operating the Downie and Wheeler Circus on ten cars. Wheeler operated his own ten car Wheeler Bros. in 1914. In 1915 he returned to overland movement using the New Model title. As noted earlier he was part owner of the Tompkins Real Wild West wagon show 1913-17. In 1916, Wheeler was in partnership with Van Lear Black, a wealthy Baltimore businessman, in his largest circus, Wheeler Bros. Enormous Shows on twenty-seven cars. Unfortunately, it

AL F. WHEELER'S NEW MODEL SHOWS

SEASON OF 1930

BY JOSEPH T. BRADBURY



Al F. Wheeler. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

folded before the season ended, and late in the year Wheeler again returned to wagon show operation.

Wheeler's activities have not been documented from 1918 to 1920. According to an article in the December 7, 1929 *Billboard* by Fletcher Smith, Wheeler assumed the name of Frank Belmont and for a while had the side show and privileges and was assistant to Rose Killian operating a wagon show under that title. Later he was with

The performing personnel and midway of the Al F. Wheeler Circus in 1930.

Ringling Bros. and had charge of a vaudeville-type act.

On March 10, 1921 Wheeler wrote to J. G. Hubbard in Boston, Massachusetts: "Replying to yours of the 24th regarding use of the 'Belmont Bros.' title."

"I fully note what you write regarding the name in question, and feel that you are just as much entitled to use it as I am, although I have used it for something 25 years, off and on, as you could find out by writing the Feist Printing Company of White Haven, Pennsylvania,

who used to do printing for me when I used the title in connection with my own name.

"I hardly think that our routes would in any way conflict, so you go ahead and use the title if you want."

A Belmont's Wonderland and Wild Animal Arena letterhead (year unknown) lists Frank Belmont as owner and manager. The permanent address was Oxford, Pennsylvania.

Returning to his original moniker he was manager of the Elmer Jones two car show using the Wheeler Bros. title in 1921 and 1922. Later he was with the M. L. Clark & Sons overland show. He was side show manager on Hunt's Circus in 1927.

In 1928 and 1929 Wheeler managed the motorized Silvan-Drew Circus. The story of that show was covered in the January-February 1987 *Bandwagon*.

The December 24, 1954 *Albemarle, North Carolina Stanley News and Press* published an extensive article about Almond and his life in show business. It read in part: "In 1900, a young man, tired of the news hawking and driven by an impatient desire to be independent, invested his entire fortune of \$100, amassed by hard work and frugality, into a crude movie projector outfit and hit the open road in a cheap wagon pulled by a borrowed horse.

"Mr. Almond was born on a farm near Plyer in Stanley county on October 28, 1868, just three years after the end of the Civil War.





The Wheeler bandwagon semi-trailer in Clayton, New York on July 3, 1930.

"As a youth, he left the farm and worked for a time in the cotton mills in Albemarle and Concord for twenty cents per day. Later, he was raised to \$1.00 per day. Soon he abandoned the textile work and began selling newspapers, magazines, snacks, and knickknacks for the Union News Company. He rode trains over thirteen states during the fourteen years or so he was engaged in that pursuit.

"Electric street cars were then coming into popularity in the south, and Mr. Almond quit the news business to work with a utilities concern in Charlotte. He was the first conductor to carry out an electric street car in the Queen City, and worked sixteen hours per day for \$30 per month.

"Traveling shows in those days drew good crowds," Almond said. "I had seen a lot of shows, and the idea of selling entertainment appealed strongly to me. And, after due deliberation, I started my first show."

His first show was given in January, 1900. But, after the same show had been given several times, the attendance dropped off sharply, and the owner faced the fact that must seek variety in his show or else seek greener pastures.

"For its second season, another wagon was added and a small tent with stands of three days and a week. The next year, a third wagon was added and the little tent enlarged ten feet to accommodate larger crowds. At the close of the 1902 season all the wagons were sold, and a small railroad car was purchased. With this equipment he continued for a number of years.

"Later, a second railroad car was added and in 1916 the outfit had two shows out, each with two cars. C. E. Springer was in charge of the second unit. Springer remained with the Almond shows for a total of thirty-one years, until his death several years ago.

"Because of the high railroad rates prevailing at the end of World War I, the cars were discarded and the show was motorized, continuing with vaudeville and dramatic offerings until the

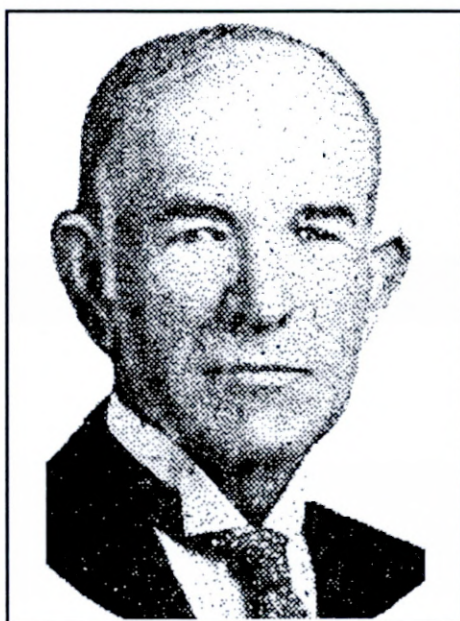
close of the 1929 season, when a circus partnership was formed with Al F. Wheeler.

The first sign that Wheeler was planning a new show came in the November 9, 1929 *Billboard* which reported that Wheeler, manager of the Silvan-Drew Circus the previous season, stated he had severed his connection with that show and would put out the Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows in 1930.

The December 7, 1929 issue gave more details with an article headed: "Wheeler, Almond planning motor show of 30 trucks, will bear title of Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows and have all new equipment. William J. Cain employed as general agent."

Dated November 30, Albemarle, North Carolina it read: "Al F. Wheeler and Jethro Almond, for many years manager of the Jethro Almond Shows, will put out the Al F. Wheeler New Model Shows for the coming season as a 30 truck motorized show with practically all new equipment and a very classy outfit. Winter quarters have been obtained here from which point the show will start out early in April touring the

Jethro Almond, co-owner of the 1930 New Model Shows.



A Wheeler straight truck and animal cage ready for a 1930 parade.

middle and eastern states where the New Model enjoys an enviable reputation.

"All canvas, from marquee to dressing rooms will be new. Two rings and a stage will be used for the big show program. While the work of building and equipping the show will be done here, Mr. Wheeler, will, as in the past, retain his winter office at Oxford, Pennsylvania.

"The business staff will be announced later and will be made up principally of former employees of Wheeler and Jethro Almond shows. William J. Cain will be general agent and three trucks and an agent's car will be used with the advance, with an elaborate line of all special paper."

The Silvan-Drew Circus was sold at auction in a receiver's sale at Greensboro, North Carolina on December 14, 1929. It was reported that Wheeler and Almond bought both animals and equipment. It is suspected that they purchased most of the show.

The December 21, *Billboard* reported that C. E. Springer, who for the last 18 years had been assistant manager of the Jethro Almond Shows, would fill the position of general superintendent with Wheeler's show the coming season. He was already in charge of the winter quarters.

"Mr. Springer's long and varied experience in the tent show business should simply qualify him as a valuable acquisition to the Wheeler and Almond forces."

This advertisement appeared in the December 28, *Billboard*: "Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows want for tenting season 1930. Big Show, feature acts, fast comedy acts, versatile single performers, clowns who can work come in. Domestic animal trainer. Those with house cars preferred. Echo and Yoshida, write. Band leader with good library. Musicians who drive trucks. Extra pay for driving. No touring cars wanted. Calliope player, doubling band. Tom Lynch write. Side show manager with several acts and novelty features for this department. Wild West, performers

with stock and truck for concert. Indian family. Candy package man. Want man and wife to run this. Assistant boss canvasman and side show canvasman. Shorty Gilson and Roy Spears write. Experienced seat man, experienced circus mechanic. Brooker write. Low sure salaries. Open in North Carolina in April. Address, Al F. Wheeler, Oxford, Pennsylvania."

New Year's Day 1930 arrived, marking what would later be known as the first full year of the Great Depression. No one as yet was particularly worried. Most "experts" predicted only a mild, short recession. Showmen, including Wheeler and Almond, continued with their plans for the new season.

The January 4, 1930 *Billboard* headlined a story: "Equipment of Wheeler Shows in Albemarle, North Carolina."

Dated that city, December 28th it read: "All of the outfit brought by Al F. Wheeler, the entire equipment of the Jethro Almond Show, as well as a large amount of property recently purchased at the Silvan-Drew sale, including all the trained animal acts of that show are now nicely put away for the winter here."

"Superintendent Springer is in charge of the winter work, and at this early date has already commenced the work of rebuilding the outfit. A contract has been let for the building of four truck bodies, which will include two band trucks and two tableaux. Two more trailer cages are also being built, which will give the show a seven cage menagerie. All canvas will be new, and will include a four pole big top and three pole menagerie. The big show program will have two rings and one stage, with trained animal numbers strongly featured, all owned by the show."

"Wheeler left for his home at Oxford, Pennsylvania, December 21, and will attend to the booking of the show from that office, Almond being in charge of the office here. A new animal house has just been completed where the wild an-

Two of Leo Snyder's trucks on Wheeler in 1930.

imals are now comfortably housed for the winter. A large warehouse formerly used by the Almond shows has been converted into a ring barn and stables for ring stock. Dave Costello of the Costello Circus, and Ray W. Rogers of Barnett Bros. Circus were recent visitors."

The showman's weekly Bible, the *Billboard*, gave frequent reports on the progress of the new Wheeler and Almond show. The February 1 issue said that Tom P. Lynch would tickle the ivories on the fine National air calliope instrument that would be housed in a neatly decorated truck in the parade.

The February 15 *Billboard* headlined its coverage story: "Tiger Bill's Wild West with Al F. Wheeler Shows."

"Leo E. Snyder's Tiger Bill wild west show has been engaged as one of the features of the Al F. Wheeler Shows. The company will be made up of Leo E. Snyder (Young Tiger Bill), Mrs. Leo Snyder, Oklahoma Red Hardy, Chuck Hinson, Snyder Brothers, and Chief Running Elk's Indian Village."

"Two truck loads of wild west stock will be carried for program and parade. The Snyder show has winter quarters at Greenville, Michigan."

"Jack Phillips, after filling the position of bandmaster with the Sparks show for sixteen consecutive seasons, will this year be with the Al F. Wheeler New Model Shows as musical director. He will have a band of twelve musicians with Tom Lynch on the calliope. The musical program will be featured."

A short piece in the February 22 issue noted that Harry and Bobbie Barrows would be with the show presenting their novelty aerial numbers and comedy trampoline act.

In early March it was announced that Lloyd Kirtley, for many years with the Jethro Almond Shows, had been engaged as press agent back with the show. In addition to looking after the press, Kirtley was to have charge of a number of concessions. Mrs. Ethel Kirtley would fill the position of prima donna in the big show program.

A week later it was reported that James and Bernice Loster had been en-

gaged. It was stated Tiger Bill had added two new trucks. The bodies were being built to transport the wild west stock.

The March 15 *Billboard* listed the advance forces for the Wheeler show. It included William J. Cain, general agent; L. H. Jones, brigade agent; Ned W. Bolt, contracting press agent and F. H. Clancy and Sam Anderson, brushes. Ed and Hazel Stendahl would have the No. 2 brigade with one assistant. Three trucks and an agent's car would be used ahead, using nearly all special paper.

The final March *Billboard* advised the Damm brothers had been contracted with Wheeler to do their comedy acrobatic ring numbers and to do work with the Six American Arabs. Gloria and Yvonne Damm also would be with the show, the former working a cockatoo act in the side show and Yvonne appearing in the spec and concert.

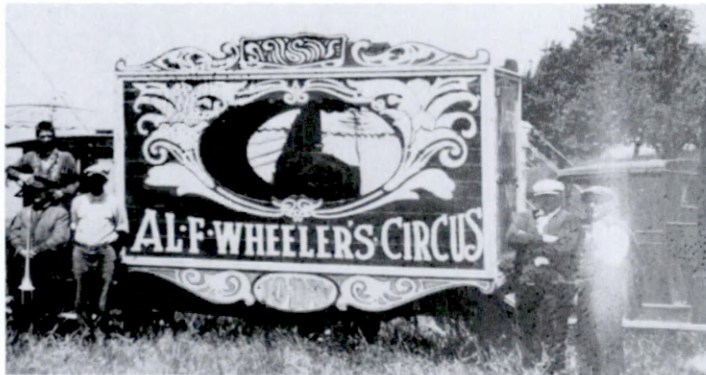
The following week saw the announcement of the band lineup. It included Jack Phillips, director; Fred Stockwell and James Arts, cornets; James Johnston and Harry W. Staube, clarinets; George B. Martin and Tom P. Lynch, trombones; Charles Raimier and Lloyd Kirtley, altos; Amos A. Buck, baritone; Charles A. Smith, bass and Harry Richards, drums.

As opening day neared the April 12 *Billboard* headed a story, "Activity at quarters of the Wheeler show."

"Albemarle, North Carolina, April 5. With the opening date only two weeks off everyone is hustling around the quarters of the Wheeler show. General agent William J. Cain has been out for several weeks. L. H. Jones with his No. 1 brigade is now billing the surrounding county for the opening date, April 19. Ed and Hazel Stendahl with the No. 2 brigade will leave early next week."

"The last of the new trucks were received early this week and are now taking on their finishing touches of decorating. Assistant manager Jack Riddle arrived and is busy helping to whip things into shape and incidentally lin-

The National air calliope in its parade truck in 1930.



ing up display ads for the big top.

"Jack Mabury is putting the finishing touches on several new trained animal displays. Active rehearsals will commence early next week. All the new canvas has arrived and superintendent Springer has a force of men fitting it with new poles and overhauling the seating equipment. Master mechanic Brooker has the trucks in fine condition and Henry Richardson, chief electrician, with his two lighting plants promises a well lighted show.

"Twenty trucks and trailers will be used in parade with twenty-two head of ring stock and ponies."

The same issue carried this advertisement: "Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows Want. Versatile aerial team. Single performers, especially ladies, strong cornet, assistant boss canvasman, seat man, workmen who drive trucks. All performers and musicians report to show lot, Albemarle, North Carolina, Thursday, April 17. Answer call by mail. Box M, Albemarle, North Carolina."

The 1930 circus season was now at hand. Railroad shows going out included Ringling-Barnum, 90 cars; Sells-Floto, 40 cars; Hagenbeck-Wallace, 30 cars; Al G. Barnes, 30 cars; John Robinson, 25 cars; Sparks, 20 cars, all these shows owned by John Ringling. There were also Robbins Bros., 30 cars; Christy Bros., 20 cars; Cole Bros. (Floyd King), 10 cars; and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West, 30 cars. Elmer Jones' Cole and Rogers, a three-car gilly railer, was also on the road.

Motorized outfits in addition to Wheeler included: Downie Bros., Mighty Haag, Gentry Bros., Schell Bros, Hunt's, Walter L. Main, Russell Bros., Seils-Sterling, M. L. Clark & Sons (E. E. Coleman), Anderson Bros., LaMont Bros., Ketrow Bros., Orton Bros., Brison Bros. (Sam Dock), Conroy Bros., O'Neil Bros., Vanderburg Bros., Olinger Bros., Harr Bros., Robinson Bros. (Tom Adkinson), McClure Bros., Henry Bros., J. J. Evans, Rose Killian, Coup Bros., Yankee Patterson, and Campbell Bros.

Railroad shows parading included Robbins Bros., Christy Bros., Cole Bros. and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West.



Al F. Wheeler in front of a parade truck at Woolcott, New York on June 25, 1930.

Several of the larger overland shows paraded, including Wheeler.

Photos show most of the Wheeler trucks were straight bed. There was at least one semi, well decorated, and used as the lead band truck in the parade. Several truck cabs were custom built to provide sleeping space for the driver. Some cages were built on straight bed trucks and others on four wheel trailers. The cage count varied in reports from five to seven. An educated guess suggests three cage trucks and three cage trailers, for a total of six.

Wheeler and Almond organized the Eastern Circus Corporation to operate the circus. The percentage of ownership between the two is unknown. Apparently Almond held the greater share as he put more into it by way of all the useable equipment from his show. Wheeler was with it from 1930 to 1933. In 1931 and 1932 the show was titled Wheeler & Sautelle, in 1933 Wheeler &

This lithograph was used by Wheeler's first circus from 1904 to 1910. A supply of the paper, long in storage, was used in 1930. Author's collection.



Almond, in 1934 Almond & Conley, and in 1935 Jethro Almond. With this scenario in place, in all probability, Almond was in control the entire way.

Reports on the show's canvas mention only a four pole big top and three pole sideshow-menagerie with no sizes given. Photos show it was new canvas. The big top was about an 80 with three 40s (or 30s). The side show-menagerie was a 60 with two 30s. Photos show that the motorized equipment was

well painted and lettered.

Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows opened as planned in Albemarle, North Carolina on April 19. The next day, a Sunday, was off, then three more dates were played in the state, Thomasville, Elkin, and Sparta before moving into Virginia at Galax. That state was crossed in six stands then the show went to West Virginia with the initial date at War on May 1. Little more than a month was played in the state, then it was on to Pennsylvania at Burgettstown on June 4.

The *Billboard* didn't publish the usual opening day report. A full review of the show's program and personnel came late in August. Notes from the Wheeler outfit appeared in most issues.

The first article after opening came a month later. The May 17 *Billboard* said in headlines: "Wheeler's New Model Shows enjoy good business."

"Getting away to a good start at Albemarle, North Carolina April 19 the Wheeler show has enjoyed uniformly satisfactory biz in all its stands to date, with several capacity houses to record."

"The big show program moves with a snap from start to finish and pleases all, while Jack Phillips has a band that

would be a feature with any big railroad show. The side show, with eight platforms and six cages of animals, has done good biz in all stands. A very pleasing feature of that department being an all white orchestra furnishing excellent music for the acts. Charles LaBird is a recent addition to this department.

"Jethro Almond is a busy man, early and late, and is enthusiastic about his first circus venture. His thirty years in show biz having been devoted to repertoire and vaudeville shows.

"Recent visitors were



A sleeper on the Al F. Wheeler New Model in 1930.

Walter L. Main, Mrs. Cly Newton and Oscar Wiley of the Main circus, and Fred Newell, veteran circus agent. General agent William J. Cain reports prospects very bright ahead.

"The roster of the big show band with Al F. Wheeler includes Jack Phillips, director; Mack Jurado and Delbert Byrd, cornets; James Johnston and Fred Meckler, clarinets; Lloyd Kirkley and Charles Raimor, altos; George Martin and Howard Schultz, trombones; Amos Buck, baritone; Charles C. Smith, bass; Harry Richards, drums and Tom P. Lynch, air calliope.

"The musical program is featured and has received favorable mention in nearly all stands."

The band roster indicated some changes had already occurred in its personnel. Other changes in personnel and performers came later in the season.

The May 24 *Billboard* reported that the Wheeler circus had enjoyed ideal circus weather. While no turn-aways had been recorded, business had been uniformly satisfactory since the opening. Three new trucks had been added, making a total of 36 trucks and trailers.

Other notes said that three rings were used for the performance. Night crowds had been big, matinees light.

Superintendent Splinger had the outfit moving with fine speed, always in and up on time. Only one parade had been missed and that because of the streets being impassible. General agent Cain was back with the show at Fayetteville, West Virginia on May 12.

A final item said Leo Snyder's wild west was presenting the concert and had good attendance nearly every night. Jack Riddle was loading the big top with banners. The annex attractions included: Prof Johnson, magician and lecturer; Mme Zaleeta's trained cockatoos; Charles Raimor, musical act; Prince the wonder dog; Mazie Coley, sword box; Lloyd Kirtley and George Woods, ticket sellers; Roy Spears, front door. An all white orchestra of five pieces furnished the music for the acts. Business in this department had been good in all stands.

The June 14 *Billboard* reported on the show's activities for the prior weeks noting that with ideal circus weather the Wheeler organization had enjoyed good business through Virginia and West Virginia. Capacity night houses were the rule for three weeks.

Jimmie Loster, who was out of the program for two weeks because of an accident, was again back on the job. Mrs. Al F. Wheeler joined at McDonald, Pennsylvania.

The show played ten consecutive dates in the Keystone State with the final stand at Fryburg on June 14. After a Sunday off the circus went into New York at Gowanda and remained seven weeks and two days. The last stand came at Callie on August 5 before returning to Pennsylvania for Honesdale and Milford and on to New Jersey at Newton on August 8.

The June 28 *Billboard* headed a report: "Wheeler circus doing satisfactory business.

"The Al F. Wheeler New Model Shows is doing a highly satisfactory business over its old routes in Pennsylvania and New York states where the 'New Model' is well and favorably known. At East Brady, Pennsylvania (June 13) the show had the pleasure of entertaining Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sparks and Mr. and Mrs. Clifton Sparks and family. Fryburg, Pennsylvania (June 14), the home of every showman's friend, Mal Fleming of the state's circus fans, in the face of heavy opposition gave a big night house because of the efforts of Fleming, who aided advance forces in securing billing space. He gave the entire day in making the visit to his town a pleasant and profitable one.

"William Newton of the Walter L. Main Circus was a visitor at this place, his show being only 14 miles away. Many visits were passed between the two shows.

"The Wheeler program is giving satisfaction. Two more cages have been added to accommodate the new shipment of animals due to arrive this week to augment the menagerie."

There were no trade publication reports for about a month. This advertisement appeared in the July 12 *Billboard*: "Al F. Wheeler's Circus. Want, to join at once. Feature act for big show, versatile people for big show, side show

and concert, experienced seat men, candy butcher. For Rent, Lunch stand to party with good outfit. Want to buy small gentle elephant (trained) and cage animals. Long season, low but sure salaries. July 9, Tupper Lake; 10, Long Lake; 11 North Creek; 12, Warrensburg; 14, Corinth, all New York State."

The Wheeler show did not have an elephant. Elephants were at a premium for motorized circuses in the very early 1930s. They had to be small so they could be transported easily. In the mid 1920s when overland shows still moved by a combination of wagon and motor power large elephants like those of the M. L. Clark & Son and Mighty Haag Show walked overland. Those days were now gone. Shows were now fully motorized and elephants, like the rest of the animals, had to be moved by truck.

The July 26 *Billboard* headlined its coverage, "Al F. Wheeler's Shows having good business." It was noted that ideal circus weather and good business still favored the circus. The night houses in particular had been very satisfactory for the prior two weeks.

Continuing the story said: "At Warrensburg, New York (July 12) the show was favored with a visit from Charles Burnham and Frank H. Stowell, the latter of whom at one time was with the Sig Sautelle Circus.

"At Corinth (July 14), Charles Harris spent the day with the show and had the pleasure of entertaining Claude M. Roode, noted wire artist who started his career with Wheeler's New Model. Ray Gassard, scenic artist of Glenn Falls, who for several seasons decorated this show, was also a visitor at the same place. Frank Ketrow visited in Corinth and reported very satisfactory business for the Ketrow Bros. Circus that was playing nearby territory.

"The big show program is moving with snap and the same can be said of the wild west concert, given by Leo Snyder's Tiger Bill contingent."

It was now mid summer and 1930 was one of the hottest and driest on

The closed air calliope truck with a cage in Clayton, New York.



record in many sections of the country, especially the midwestern and plains states. This, coupled with the ever increasing depression, was devastating to many shows. Hardest hit were the small and medium railers.

Two well known circus owners had their last experience operating railers during the summer of 1930. George W. Christy's twenty car Christy Bros. Circus had it rough from the start. It was cut to ten cars early but that didn't save it. Christy closed in early July. In mid August Floyd King's ten car Cole Bros. Circus folded. Fred Buchanan's thirty car Robbins Bros. had to drop ten cars, but finished the season though in poor financial condition. Elmer Jones' three car Cole & Rogers also closed early.

Motorized circuses with their lower operating expenses or not had a better survival rate. Wheeler and Almond's show played extensively through the New York resort areas. From all reports it did satisfactory business, though there was heavy competition from other circuses.

The August 9 *Billboard* advised in headlines: "Wheeler show in New York. Business satisfactory over old routes. Receives new side show top and banners."

"The Al F. Wheeler circus continues to do very satisfactory business over its old routes through New York State.

"Many visitors have been with the old show in that section. At Richfield Spring (July 18) Dr. Alfred R. Crain and Charles Williams and family were guests. Kenneth Van, son of Pearl Van visited, bringing with him a truck load of new poles and stakes for the big top.

"All visitors pronounce the outfit one of the finest they have seen with a motorized show and the performance one of the most pleasing they have seen with any of the medium size shows. A new side show top was received at Walton (July 28) as well as several new banners for the front. Several additions to the menagerie have been made.

"The side show under the management of Charles La-Bird has done very good biz. James S. Johnston in charge of the inside has a strong line of attractions. Marie Cook, niece of Jethro Almond, has charge of the candy stands and business in that department has averaged big.

"Jack Riddle has missed only two days the last month that the show has not had cars in the parade and big top. Lee Wheeler paid the show a flying visit last week. He is off the road this season

looking after Wheeler's real estate interests at Oxford, Pennsylvania."

Another extensive report came in the following week's *Billboard* that noted it would be a long season for Wheeler. After a few more weeks in New Jersey the New Model was to head South. With continued pleasant circus weather the show had enjoyed uniformly satisfactory business the prior two weeks. The circus played 19 stands in New Jersey, the final date coming at Penns Grove on August 29.

Continuing, the *Billboard* account read: "While the opposition brigade has had a long season so far, the East being literally alive with motorized shows. Business has held up to the Wheeler standard in all of its old territory. Several additions have been made to the big show program, which is giving satisfaction in every stand, as is attested by the liberal after notices accorded by the press.

"Little Norma Hicks and Yvonne Damm, who appear in the opening spec, mounted on tiny Shetland ponies and taking part in the singing number, never fail to score. Dixie Armstrong, prima donna, is putting over the musical program in a very pleasing manner.

"The outfit is moving like clock work under the watchful eye of superintendent Springer with a capable corps of bosses in every department. Governor Al F. Wheeler made a flying trip to New York last week and purchased several animals for the menagerie.

"Jethro Almond is a very busy man early and late. In addition to his show interests he is also owner of two large rabbit ranches at Albemarle and Charlotte, North Carolina, where fancy rabbits are bred and shipped to all parts of the country. Several pairs of prize winners are on exhibition in the menagerie tent."

This stock Standard Printing lithograph was used in 1930.

Finally, well past the halfway mark of the season the *Billboard* sent a reporter from the New York office to visit and give a full review of the Wheeler show. It appeared in the August 30 issue headlined: "Wheeler show proves winner. Now touring Jersey coast resorts after 45 stands in NY and PA.

"Springfield, New Jersey, August 23. Al F. Wheeler has realized his long cherished ambition to have a first class motorized show, and his 27th year as a manager finds him directing the New Model Shows which are true to their billing and a credit in the finest sense, to the Wheeler name.

"That the show has met with public approbation is attested by the good business that has ruled throughout the tour with weak spots in the minority. At Metcong, New Jersey, August 11, the show stood 'em up and for six days before that stand the gross business was gratifying.

"The parade looks like a million dollars and is responsible, in a large measure for the show's success. The pageant consisting of twenty trucks, with plenty of music and hilarity, and is motorized throughout.

"The canvas and equipment are new and modern. The big top is a four poler and the red trimmings set it off to advantage. The side show tent has three poles and the rest of the canvas is in keeping with the aforementioned.

"The roster contains many people who have been with Wheeler in other circuses he has directed. There's a total of 70 people on the payroll, 6 ahead with 3 brigades, and 10 in clown alley. The New Model Shows enjoy the distinction of being an all white aggregation, which is something rare in circus annals.

"The show is devoid of all racket, as Wheeler believes in the Sunday School policy of running this white topper. Even the ticket sellers are not permitted to take 'walk-away' money.

"Forty-five stands were played in New York State and Pennsylvania, and the show is now touring the Jersey coast resorts. The outfit will then continue southward on it's way to winter quarters.

"Springfield (August 12) was a fresh spot for Wheeler to break his jump to Cranford (August 13) and with the lot some distance from town, business was fair at both performances, as this is apparently not a circus-going community.

"The one hour and 45 minutes program under the direction of Jack Riddle with three rings going full blast clicks with telling re-



sults. Dixie Armstrong's vocal rendition in the opening spec adds to that number's attractiveness.

"Display 1-Swinging ladders working by Annetta Riddle, Alma Reed, and Florence Riddle. 2-Trampoline act, four Carver brothers. 3-Pony drills, Snyder and Carver brothers, followed by clown contingent. 4-Single traps, Mrs. Hicks, Bobby Snyder, and Jimmy Loster. Clowns make their reappearance. 5-Trained goats, Leo Snyder, Charles Karl, and C. Springer. 6-Hand balancing by Jimmy and Bernice Loster and Tommy Hays, wire act. Clown contingent. 7-Cloud swing, Leon Snyder, Bessie Hays, Spanish web, flying perch, Florence Riddle. Announcement followed by clown number. 8-Double traps, Tom and Bessie Hayes, double traps, Snyder brothers. Clown number. 9-Trained pony acts, Leo Snyder and Carver brothers. 10-Iron Jaw, Florence Riddle. Announcement. 11-Roman rings, Damm brothers and Tom and Bessie Hayes. 12-Chair Balancing, Jimmie and Bernie Loster. Clown number. 13-Pony drill of six ponies. 14-Comedy acrobats, Carver brothers and Damm brothers. 15- Menage act, Florence Riddle and Annetta Riddle. Clown number. 16-Center ring, Ten American Arabs, consisting of Damm brothers, Carver brothers, the Lesters, Paul Hoyle, S. Stebbing, and Mrs. Gloria LaBelle.

"The concert program starts with minstrel first part, introducing Jack Riddle and the Missus, Carver brothers, Gloria LaBelle, Jimmie and Bernie Loster, Jimmie Carver, Levi Phillips, and Tiger Bill's Wild West, featuring Leo Snyder and two sons, Bobby and Leon.

"Jack Phillips' band is all that could be desired as a musical organization offering a pleasing concert program and cuing the acts faultlessly. Phillips, it will be remembered was band leader on Sparks Circus for 16 seasons and still wields a mean baton with the following personnel, O. S. French, solo cornet; D. Byrd assistant cornet; J. Johnston, clar-

inet; Henry Wood, alto; C. V. Hicks, trombone; Tom Lynch, trombone; Amos Buck, baritone; Charles Smith, bass; Harry (Doc) Richards, drums and traps; and Levi Phillips, bass drum.

"Charles La Bird is manager of the side show and is a ventriloquist par excellence with the following co-workers: Jimmie Johnston, magician, also featuring his wonder dog, Prince Jr. in clever tricks; Mme Belmont and her trained birds; Mme Mae, sword box, assisted by Charles Karl, George Del Kanno, musical act. Five open cages of wild animals grace the interior spaces. It is a treat to hear manager Wheeler make the opening of this show, his delivery and diction are excellent, and he holds the attention of his auditors and never fails to turn the majority of his tip.

"The staff of the New Model Shows has Al F. Wheeler and Jethro Almond as owner and managers. Mrs. Almond is custodian of the front door; Mrs. Wheeler in charge of reserved seats; Jack Riddle, assistant manager; Charles LaBird Sr., director publicity; William J. Cain, general agent; Roy Spears, boss canvasman; Charles Prophet, assistant on big top; John Utt, boss canvasman of the side show; Clyde Lewis, boss props; Charles Hudgins, superintendent of stock; Jack Reid, steward; Mrs. Reid, superintendent of dining tent; C. E. Springer, general superintendent. Mrs. Marie Cook has the candy stands.

"The show carries two light plants that are in charge of superintendent Phoska. Twenty styles of paper are used on the advance. Popular prices prevail--25 and 50 cents with reserves 25 cents."

Evidently, announced plans that the show would head southward following the New Jersey tour were changed. The show returned to Pennsylvania at Clifton Heights, August 30, and played eight additional stands in the state. Then came a return to New York at Montour Falls, September 10, with eight additional dates following. Wells-ville, September 19, was the final stand in the Empire State. Then came ten more Pennsylvania dates beginning at

Eldred, September 20, and concluding with Confluence on October 1.

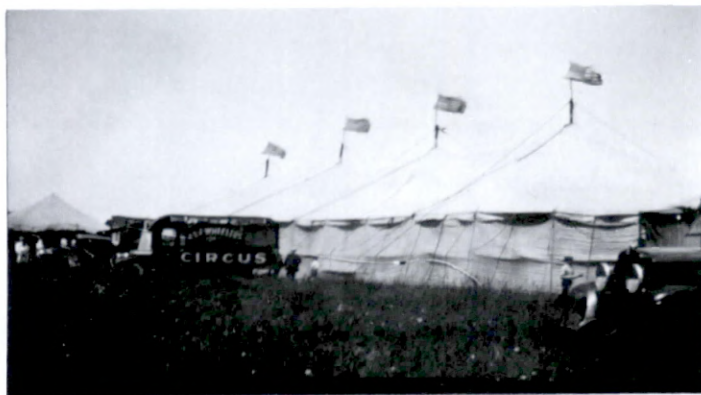
The September 6 *Billboard* contained this advertisement: "Al F. Wheeler's Circus Want. To join on wire, strong first chair cornet for big show band. Lunch stand to rent for balance of this season and next. Will consider only party with nice outfit. Gilt-Edge proposition to right party. Route, Birdsboro, September 3; Myerstown, 4; Palmyra, 5; Duncannon, 6; all Pennsylvania."

Two weeks later the September 20 *Billboard* reported on the show's happenings. It noted that with pleasant circus weather business with the Wheeler outfit had been very satisfactory for the last few weeks. While the matinees had been light at some stands, night houses had been big. At Palmyra, Pennsylvania, the Damm brothers entertained many friends from their hometown, Lebanon. While at Duncannon, the home of James S. Johnston of the annex, he was kept busy entertaining friends. September 8 was spent at Canton, Pennsylvania, home of Jesse R. Bullock, former treasurer of the show, now a prominent real estate and insurance man, as well as justice of the peace in that town. Earl Branch, cornetist, joined Jack Phillips' band at Myerstown, September 4, coming from the Hagenbeck-Wallace show.

The report concluded by stating winter quarters for the show would again be at Albemarle, North Carolina. At that early date plans were well underway for improving and enlarging the outfit for the next season. A contract had been let for the building of several new truck bodies and some new animal acts would be trained during the winter. It was the intention of Wheeler and Almond to make the New Model one of the finest motorized shows on the road for its 1931 tour.

As the circus was making its September tour through New York and Pennsylvania two large railroad shows, Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson,

The Wheeler big top and backyard in Woolcott, New York.





had already closed because of bad business. The John Robinson show and title was shelved by John Ringling and never again go on the road.

The *Billboard* headlined a piece: "Wheeler show adds several animals." The story said that while the past week's route had taken the show well north for this time of the year, the weather had favored the outfit with wonderful fall weather. Business had been up to the New Model standard in nearly all stands. On September 13 at Mt. Morris, New York, several animals purchased from the Cole & Rogers Shows arrived, giving Wheeler seven well filled cages in the menagerie.

When the Wheeler show played Attica on September 16 Al F. Wheeler and Mrs. Wheeler paid a flying visit to Andrew Downie's home at Medina, New York. While Downie was still confined to his home, he was in his usual good spirits and hoped to be out again soon. (Downie died early in 1931.)

With the drought broken, the farmers seemed in a better spending mood, as was signified by the big night crowds of the prior week. J. T. Cole, who had charge of the winter quarters at Albe-

Al F. Wheeler used this full color Christmas card in December 1930.



The Wheeler side show bannerline in Woolcott, New York on June 25, 1930.

marle, North Carolina reported he had already let contracts for building a new ring barn.

General agent William J. Cain reported prospects ahead still looked bright and up to that time the closing date remained a matter of conjecture.

The same issue carried this advertisement: "Al F. Wheeler Circus. wants for balance of season, neat, experienced billposter who drives truck. Sober man only. Assistant electrician. Workingmen who drive trucks." Five Pennsylvania dates were listed.

A week later the *Billboard* reported that it looked as if the Wheeler outfit would be among the last of the northern shows to go into winter quarters, as up to that time no definite plans for closing had been announced.

Although the nights were getting a little cold, business held up in nearly all stands with big night houses in evidence most of the time.

The wild west contingent was to be enlarged for the 1931 season. The management planned to feature that part of the program. The show had one more week in Pennsylvania and would then head for the South.

Leaving the Keystone State the show headed back to quarters with two dates in Maryland, Frostburg, October 2, and Lonaconing the next day. A single stand in West Virginia came at Ronney, October 4, then it went into Virginia for the final eighteen days of the season. The Old Dominion tour began at Front Royal on October 6. The closing stand was in Chase City, October 25.

The October 25 *Billboard* said the show would be enlarged and carry more than forty trucks next season. Wheeler was to close a highly successful season at Chase City, Virginia, October 25, and go into winter quarters.

The show was to be greatly enlarged and improved during the winter months. The opening of the 1931 tenting season was to find the New Model among the largest and

finest motorized shows on tour with upwards of 40 trucks. Many new trained animal acts were to be perfected during the winter. The menagerie was also to be augmented.

In early November it was reported that William J. Cain had been re-engaged for 1931 as general agent. The advance department was to have four trucks and an agent's car.

The last account of the Wheeler show came in the December 27 *Billboard* that advised that as in the past seasons the winter office of the Wheeler circus would be at Oxford, Pennsylvania. The winter quarters at Albemarle would be in charge of Jethro Almond and superintendent C. E. Springer. The work of rebuilding and enlarging the outfit was already well underway. Nearly all of last season's bosses and department heads were re-engaged for the 1931 season.

Thus 1930, the season that saw the revival of the Al F. Wheeler's New Model Shows title also saw it fade into history. The show had evidently enjoyed a successful season despite it being the first full year of the great depression. It would go out again in 1931, but with a new title, Wheeler & Sautelle's Circus.

The Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin provided material for this article. The full route was not reproduced here as a copy is on file in Baraboo for those who might desire it.

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One day while reading the *Billboard* on the Royal American Shows in Superior, Minnesota I came across an interesting advertisement. The Al G. Kelly & Millers Bros. Circus was in need of a steward for their cookhouse. I was feeling a little blue and down in the dumps as the Canadian tour had not turned out as I had hoped. I sent off a short note saying I was interested in the position of steward for the 1953 season. I told them I would visit the show if it was not too far away. I really didn't dream of hearing from Kelly-Miller.

The following week the Royal was playing the Minnesota State Fair in St. Paul. Lo and behold, there was a letter awaiting me from D. R. Miller. He enclosed a route card and said he would be glad to talk about the steward position for the next season.

The St. Paul fair had a strict and tight admission gate. Every person from the lowly workingman to the Governor of the state had to pay admission. No pass gates. Each time you entered the grounds it was pay or stay out.

Our sleeping cars were on a siding, less than a short block from the ticket windows of the fair. The fair grounds opened early in the morning, and closed late at night. The show folks had a hasty breakfast, and I would not see hide nor hair of them until late at night. By then they were too tired to have a meal. That meant a big loss to my two "pie cars" for the entire engagement.

So, I decided to take a busman's holiday and visit the Kelly-Miller circus in Sauk City, Wisconsin. On the way the passenger train stopped in Madison. I got off there to visit my old alma mater, the Clyde Beatty railroad circus. I had plenty of time as the Kelly-Miller show would not be in Sauk City until early the next morning. Upon my arrival at the hotel in Sauk City I found some old friends sitting in the lobby. "Dutch" Givler, the twenty-four hour man and Dick Scatterday, national advertising representative for K-M were in town a day ahead. We sat around cutting up jack pots until bed time.

The next morning I was up bright and early. I had a good breakfast at the hotel and took a cab to the circus grounds to meet Dory Miller. It was still early, not yet 10 a.m. The entire circus was in the air, ready for the afternoon performance.

I had a nice chat with Dory and his dad, Obert. They both agreed that I would enjoy operating their cookhouse. I quoted the salary I needed; everyone was satisfied. So we shook hands and I departed for the hotel and then to the

THE CIRCUS STEWARD KELLY-MILLER 1953 and JULY FOURTH DINNERS

By John M. Staley

depot for the train ride back to the mines on the Royal American.

It never dawned on me until I was back on the big pie car that the Kelly-Miller Circus was a motorized show moving every night. I did not own a car and in fact had never driven one. On top of that I would also have to buy a house trailer. It was something to worry about in my spare time. One thing sure, come spring I would be on the Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus.

After putting the two dining cars in moth balls for the winter at Tampa quarters on the Florida State Fairgrounds I headed for home in Sarasota.

Ringling-Barnum closed its 1952 season on November 23 in Miami. About three weeks later I was told Elvin "The Sheriff" Welch had turned his Plymouth station wagon in for a new one. I knew Elvin from the Russell Bros. Pan-Pacific and Beatty shows. He was a very careful and competent driver. He never allowed any other person to drive his car.

D. R. and Obert Miller on the Kelly-Miller midway in 1953. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise noted.



I made a beeline for the Plymouth dealer. After some dickering I bought the station wagon. Not being able to drive I had them deliver it for me.

It was not long until I had two good instructors showing me how to drive safely and how to shift with a stick. My next door neighbor and a friend, Joe McCarthy, had me out on the highway to polish my driving skills.

Time was ticking fast, too darn fast to suit me. So when my instructors said I was

ready I went down for my drivers license. I was all aflutter on the way there. Needless to say I did not pass my test. Mary Bradley, who had gone with me, drove the car home. I was sure down in the dumps for a few days. But I had to realize the show had to go on and I was expected in Hugo, Oklahoma the later part of March. From that day on I have never taken another driver test. Yet, I have driven all over the United States and Canada. Day after day I never had an accident.

Luckily, there was another man going to Hugo to join the show. As I only had restricted driver's license, for day time driving, I had him come along as a driver. Believe it or not I drove two thirds of the way.

I did not have a driver's license until the circus reached Walnut Ridge, Arkansas on May fourth. Walnut Ridge was the home of Art Miller, the general agent of the circus. He was ahead of the show, and I was not sure if he would be on the lot in his home town. He wrote a note to one of his cronies at city hall. Upon presenting the note I was given a blank driver's license. I was told to fill it out myself. The charge was one dollar. I still have that old license as a souvenir.

Kelly-Miller opened in its home town on Sunday April 19th. The show did not move until the next morning. This was my first experience of pulling a house trailer. Just my luck, I missed the arrow off the lot. I didn't realize until fifteen miles later that I had taken the wrong road. The farther I drove the narrower the road. By then it was getting soft and sandy. There was nary a circus truck in sight. I kept driving until I found a place big enough to turn around. It happened to be a farmer's front yard. To this day I still cannot back a trailer, or turn around, unless I have ten acres of open ground.

That season the big top had a spread of canvas over two hundred feet in length. It used push poles instead of the regular bale ring type center poles. The menagerie was a six pole tent over a hundred or more feet in length. When all the canvas was in the air it really

looked like what it advertised "the second largest wild animal circus." There were between 35 and 40 show-owned trucks. Most were semi-trailers. The average daily move was twenty to sixty miles. The sixty to hundred mile jumps were few and far between. Total mileage for an average season was nine to ten thousand miles.

I did not keep a daily record of meals served in the cookhouse. I figured we were feeding around one hundred people, add a few or take off a few. The workingmen were always coming and going. The workingmen were paid off each night in the pie car, so I never knew how many collected their pay and kept going down the road.

After night performance all the tents were torn down, and the semis loaded. Then the employees could either go to bed for a good night's sleep or sit up playing cards. The night watchman would awaken the entire show at four in the morning. The workingmen would then make a beeline to the cookhouse for a "nose bag" and hot coffee. Some of the drivers would down the coffee and then eat the goodies on the way to the next town.

There were only two hot meals served in the cookhouse each day, lunch and dinner. The nose bag was the breakfast meal. Each afternoon in the cookhouse the crew would make up the "dukies" or "nose bags" for the next morning. This usually would be two sandwiches, either two hard boiled eggs or a can of sardines, with key, two doughnuts or two cup cakes, a candy bar or chewing gum and two kinds of fresh fruit.

Dave and Deacon McIntosh were jointly in charge of the transportation. In my time I have known a lot of circus mechanics but those two brothers were the best in my book. It seemed they never slept. Many a morning they would be waiting at the cookhouse truck waiting until the coffee was made. Then they went to the place where all the trucks were lined up for inspection and gas. The local gas man would already be on the lot with a full tank of gasoline. Dave would take one side of the circus owned trucks and Deacon the other side. They checked the tires and anything else that might be needed. Our station wagon and house trailer were the first in line for gas and then we



The Kelly-Miller blowdown in Wilmington, Ohio on June 9, 1953. Dick Conover photo.

went down the highway.

As each truck was checked and gassed the driver was given a numbered stub that they would give to the checker at the next town. Should a driver jump ahead in the line and come on to the circus grounds the checker would later turn his number into the office and the management would want to know the reason for jumping out of line.

During a season of about seven months the Kelly-Miller Circus would not exhibit a dozen times within the city limits. The show did not want to pay high city taxes when it was much cheaper in the country. The same held true with the lots. If I am not mistaken twenty-five dollars was tops for the rental of grounds for one day. Some days the show ground would be three to seven miles from town.

The show never cut the weeds or high grass. They would take one of the trucks and run it up and down the midway and then around the hippodrome

The Kelly-Miller Circus decorated dining tent on July 4, 1953.



track in the big top. Should there be no entrance or road into the lot they would use a Farmall tractor to cut a road.

No matter where the show grounds were located, even on the highway, the entire white fleet of show trucks and semi-trailers had to follow the route markers into and around the center streets of the town. It made almost one continuous line of traffic jammed for blocks until the parade was headed back to the grounds. The only exception was the cookhouse,

big top poles and canvas spool trucks. I always drove my car and trailer directly to the lot. I very seldom made the parade. If any of the private cars and trailers skipped the parade they were cut off from free gasoline.

In 1953 Francis Kitzman was the advance car manager. He would bill each town and the surrounding country as if it was Ringling-Barnum. Whenever he found an old house or barn near the circus grounds you can make sure it would be plastered with posters, top to bottom, even on the roof. Should he run across any board fences or old gas tanks there would be "tank size" posters announcing the arrival date of the circus. These were known as "show owners daubs." These splashes let the management know the town had been well billed. At times there would be heat about these "strong arm" postings. When the show arrived in town it was up to the legal adjuster to square the beefs. Kitzman, like all good advertising managers, had more keys than most locksmiths. He was a wizard when it came to entering downtown business buildings that were vacant. He filled the "empties" with lithographs and date sheets without any passes changing hands. Obert Miller would be hot under the collar at times

when someone would complain about the lithographers entering the store without permission and pasting circus bills. Kitzman was also great in the publicity department of the show.

The two meals served each day were cafeteria style. The entire personnel entered the cookhouse at the front door. Food was served from a large steam table at the back of the tent. You could choose the food you wanted. There was a coffee urn next to the steam table. At dinner it was the same process, except there was hot soup, a salad and dessert. After

eating each person took the dirty dishes and silver to the cookhouse truck. They placed them on a table with tubs for the scraped dishes and silver. The utensils then went into a tub of soapy hot water.

During the 1953 season we had only one bad storm. We were showing in Wilmington, Ohio on June 9th. A heavy wind and rain storm hit us just as the matinee performance ended. It was no time at all until all the canvas was laying on the ground, except the cookhouse. I saw the storm coming before it hit the circus. I rounded up all the trucks that were handy and corralled them around the cookhouse tent. I always carried plenty of hook ropes for situations such as approaching wind storms. At each side pole there were guy lines that were spliced into the main section of the canvas. Large grommets received ropes that could be attached to trucks on the other end. Over the years I have never had a cookhouse blowdown. All of the canvas was back in the air in time for the night show.

Of all the Fourth of July meals I have been in all sorts of storms and I have ever served on different shows the most elaborate dinner was on Kelly-Miller. Ironically it was the smallest circus cookhouse I ever operated.

The Staley's July 4th Dinners

To the best of my knowledge over the last seventy years only one cookhouse steward went all out for a July 4th dinner. That was Charles Henry on the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Alfred "Ollie"

The cover of the Barnum & Bailey July 4, 1914 menu was printed in full color. Charles E. Henry presented the meal.



Webb, on Ringling Bros. and later on Ringling-Barnum, always had a regal feast, But it did not measure up to Henry.

Joe Dan Miller, who was at home in any circus department, was the winter quarters steward for Ringling in Baraboo. He continued in that position after the combined shows went to Bridgeport and later to Sarasota. Miller was the master of them all, including yours truly. He not only had a big feast on Christmas Day, but always had an orchestra and feature acts to perform for the workmen, bosses and guests.

Only once during my years as a cookhouse steward did I make a boo-boo for the big day. That was one of my first Fourth of July dinners. It was on James Edgar's Sparks Circus in 1947.

For some forgotten reason I had the dinner scheduled for July 5th on Prince Edward Island, Canada. I had bought everything needed that would not spoil before the circus left the mainland. The Sparks train arrived early the morning of the fifth. I was on my way downtown even before the train stopped to do my last minute shopping. The only big item still needed were the frying chickens. I felt sure I would not have any trouble getting them. Going from market to market I realized I was in a big jackpot as the chickens were the main food chosen by the personnel.

Time was running out. I had no chickens. As a last resort I grabbed a taxi and made a fast trip to the circus train and Edgar's private car. After rousing him out of bed I told him my bad news. Luckily the sleeping cars were parked on a spur track behind the passenger depot. Edgar donned a robe and a pair of slippers and we walked over to the depot. He made a long distance call to a friend of his in Moncton, New Brunswick. He asked him to get me 200 whole fryers averaging about two and a half pounds each.

The chickens were flown to Charlottetown. Edgar had his limo driver pick them up at the airport. Before noon I had my chickens and we were splitting them ready to fry or put in the oven. Each person who ordered chicken was to receive a half chicken.

In 1948 I had the Clyde Beatty cookhouse. The July Fourth dinner was also delayed that year. Due to an expected late arrival on July 4 the dinner was held on July 5th in Virginia, Minnesota. The entrees of the 1948 dinner included Tenderloin steak, King Style; Spring Chicken, Lyonnaise; Corn Beef Brisket Hawaiian; Pork Tenderloin, Regal; and Baked Ham, Isle of Spice.

In 1949 I was steward of the Cole Bros. Circus. Oddly the Independence Day dinner for the third year in a row was not held on July 4th. The special

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island DOMINION OF CANADA *July 5th, 1947

DINNER

GREEN OLIVES	ROSETTE RADISHES	RIFLE OLIVES
STUFFED CELERY	STUFFED OLIVES	GREEN ONIONS
TOMATO JUICE		
CANADIAN LOBSTER COCKTAIL		
CANADIAN PEA SOUP		
FRIED HALF SPRING CHICKEN		
FILET MIGNON AU NATURAL		
ROAST BONELESS LOIN OF PORK — BROWN GRAVY		
BRUSSEL SPROUTS		
FRENCH FRIED POTATOES	MONSIEUR POTATOES	
CORN ON COB	GARDEN FRESH PEAS	
CAULIFLOWER AU GRATIN		
EPICUREAN SALAD		
CANTALOUPE A LA MODE		
CIRCUS PUNCH	DEMI TASSE	
SALTED NUTS	CHEESE WITH CRACKERS	
AFTER DINNER MINTS		
CIGARS FOR THE MEN	CHOCOLATES FOR THE LADIES AND CHILDREN	
JOHN M. STALEY STEWART		

*Due to a predicted late arrival, this dinner was postponed till the fifth. Sincerely hope you all enjoyed yourselves.

John Staley's printed menu for the Sparks special dinner on July 5, 1947.

dinner was presented on July 3, 1949 in Rock Island, Illinois. The entrees that day were Porterhouse Steak; Sassafras Smoked Ham; Wild Pheasant ala Newburg; Fried Half Chicken; Calvert Manor Frog Legs and Roast Suckling Pig.

Whether I was feeding two hundred or twelve hundred people as on the Ringling-Barnum Circus, when it came to a choice of food chicken was the number one selection. Roughly seven out of ten people ordered chicken over baked ham, Porterhouse steaks, smoked turkey, frog legs, leg of lamb, wild pheasant ala Newburg or suckling pig.

There was no time clock to punch, yet time was forever running out on the circus. While breakfast was being served we were preparing the noon meal. On a late day we might have the oven full of meat for dinner before breakfast is over.

The annual Fourth of July dinner was always given berth at our home in Sarasota during the winter layoff months. During the season I cut out recipes from local papers. I also subscribed to several hotel and restaurant magazines. They had the latest recipes for quality feeding. After settling down at home I would clear off a large table and start to sort the recipes into different categories.

My wife and I put together a dozen or more menus only to throw them in the waste basket. I would finally come up with what I felt was the master menu. At times I saw food in my sleep. After



Cover of the Staley's Kelly-Miller menu in 1953.

the circus was on tour I was still making changes.

The final draft of the menu never went to the printer until at least two weeks before the big day.

No matter how many wagons there were for the cookhouse there was never any extra space. So most of the food for the special meal had to be ordered months and weeks ahead of time. It was to be delivered early on the day of the Fourth.

I had an agreement with the management to keep me posted where the circus would be showing on the Fourth. I would see what the jump would be the day before as well as the day after. In that way I could have the feast either of the three days. On some circuses they would not know until a week or two before the date. The dates were given to me were secret. I never leaked to dates to anyone. Some managers would keep the route from rivals. That kept them from jumping in ahead of us.

I must have lived right. In all the years I was never rained out of any of my July Fourth dinners.

As soon as I knew the date contracted I would get a letter off to the local Chamber of Commerce advising them that our show was coming to their fair city on such a date. I enclosed a list of merchants I would need. I asked that they send back the list with names and addresses. I then wrote each merchant advising what I would need from them. There were not to be any short weights,

or substitutions. If they could not fill the complete order they were to tell me. Here is a list of what I needed for just one meal: wholesale meats, seafoods, poultry, produce, a pie baker, a dairy for ice cream, fish and canned beer. I also needed a florist for bouquets for each table with red, white and blue flowers, a vending machine company for a juke box. I always carried my records of dinner music. Candy for the women and children was ordered from Chicago during the previous winter. I needed red, white and blue tablecloths and napkins and nut cups.

The day before the big meal I put a notice at the front door that help was needed to prepare some of the food. The next day after breakfast I would have all kinds of extra help. Most of the volunteers were women from the big top. They helped peel green onions, make rosette radishes and peel the cooked shrimp.

While the kitchen work was going full steam I would take some of the crew and start decorating the dinning tent inside and out. We used pennants, nautical flags and streamers going out from one flag staff to another. Between the center poles we hung a large American flag.

The flags, pennants and other decorations were my personal property. The day after the big meal I would pack the decorations and ship them home to Sarasota.

The noon meal could usually have been cancelled, very few came in to eat.

At best we served everything cold. Normally there was about three hours between the noon meal and dinner. As the last person was served and away from the table we stripped everything off. The tables were wiped down and the special table clothes were spread. The silverware was stacked like a shock of corn. Napkins and nut cups were placed at each setting. The fresh flowers were placed on the tables with the shrimp cocktails and platters of bread, butter and rolls. The pies were cut into six servings, one at each table. Relish trays were placed on each table. The canned beer and cantaloups were placed in large containers of ice.

The only time we stalled from serving dinner on schedule, or until

the performance was over, was at the July Fourth dinners. We allowed time for the performers to change their costumes. All of the personnel would sit down at one time and enjoy the meal. It was probably the only time during the season the entire show ate at the same time.

When each person entered the cookhouse they were handed a printed menu. At this meal they could order anything their little hearts desired. Every item on the bill of fare was for real. Some times a wise guy would check each item on the menu. Never did I "build up" the menu. During the meal the juke box poured out exotic sweet music. The folks enjoyed their meal. As they went out of the dinning tent the men were handed cigars. The ladies and children were given a box of chocolate candy.

The big day came and went. After eight months in the planning stage the "Christmas dinner on the Fourth of July" went down in the book as another supreme achievement. The tables were cleared. The flags came down. The wagons were loaded and the circus went on to the next stand.

Mrs. Staley and I were tired, but happy that the meal had gone off without a hitch. We had done it again. With a backward look at where the cookhouse had stood only a short while before we wended our way downtown to find a decent, clean restaurant or hotel dining room to have our belated Fourth of July dinner.

WANTED TO BUY CIRCUS BOOKS

American, European, Foreign Language, any and all it is CIRCUS.

I'm also interested in Carnival, Amusement Parks and Freaks.

Early Route books and Programs.

Autographs and cancelled checks of Circus Performers and Notables.

CLASSIC BOOKS

107 Crossroads Shopping Center
Sarasota, Florida 34239

Some shows sent hunters or buyers to far away places like Burma, Brazil, the Congo, Sumatra, India and other mysterious places to secure unique or ferocious living creatures to attract the "refined" patron who came to the circus only to let the children see exotic animals seldom found in the wilds of Kansas.

In an effort to upgrade their 1895 menagerie Lemen Brothers sent a man to capture snakes in the woods near the mouth of Walnut creek in Atchison County Kansas.

"John Woods," according to the Atchison *Weekly Champion*, April 18, "visited the man's tent last Sunday and says he has several boxes full of the reptiles, which he has captured in all parts of the county. He captured an immense bull snake on the Woods farm. The man will make an effort to capture the large rattle snake which lives on the same place."

The hunter intended to visit the large snake den on the Forbriger property but there are no reports of such a safari. Seaton Holbrook and Burt Cooper also visited the river bank camp of the hunter. The *Champion* referred to the nameless hunter as "the snake charmer."

When Lemen Brothers opened the season of 1895 at Argentine, Kansas, Saturday, May 4, their greatly augmented menagerie was ready for display. Rajah, "The Biggest Brute On Earth," was once again the greatest attraction of Lemen Brothers' New Colossal Shows.

The Argentine *Republic* announced the opening with a two-column ad on April 25. The ad, which had been used the two previous seasons, featured a cut of Rajah. Mentioned was "The ONLY BOXING KANGAROO IN THE WORLD," and "POSITIVELY THE ONLY WHITE SEA LIONS IN THE WORLD." No mention was made of eastern Kansas reptiles.

Short claims appeared scattered through the news columns of the *Republic*. "The only zebu ever seen in a Christian land will be here May 4."

"The wonderful Arabian horsemen and athletes will be in Argentine,

"The only On-Rang-Ou-Tang (sic) in this country will be in Argentine, May 4."

One might expect a newspaper to make a gala event of the opening of a hometown show, but the *Republic* gave Lemen Brothers no free mention before the opening and nothing following the exhibitions. On leaving Argentine the show disappeared from the Kansas press until the exhibitions at Seneca on September 20.

The following handout appeared Sept-

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING Nothing of the Old Can Compare With the New

Vol. IV. Chapter Five. Part One. 1895
BY ORIN C. KING

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ember 13 in the Seneca *Courier-Democrat* and was used for every Kansas date: "THE BIG SHOW.

"Lemen Brothers Combined Circus, Menagerie, Hippodrome, Oceanic Aquarium and Congress of Living Phenomena will exhibit at Seneca September 20. Reports from all quarters

This Lemen ad appeared in the September 13, 1895 Seneca *Courier-Democrat*. Kansas State Historical Society.

pronounce the above shows the leaders in tented amusements and can not fail to interest the masses. That it possesses many rare animals never before seen in this country, the only real Aquatic Show of sea animals, a great Hippodrome, a Double Circus, and many phenomenal living wonders is without question. It is enthusiastically received and immensely patronized wherever it spreads its tents, and it is said to give more and better show than any other organization in America. The newspapers are unanimous in its praise. We look for a grand outpouring of the populace here on show day."

The same advertisement ran in all three Seneca newspapers, the same ad used extensively in prior seasons.

The September 12 *News* carried the following handout: "The Coming Great Show.

"And now we are to have the far-famed Lemen Brothers. Dame rumor has placed the above Shows at the head of the list for years, and pronounce it the greatest of all great shows, whose fame is not confined to one language, but extends wherever civilized tongue is spoken. Exhibitions will be given at Seneca, September 20.

"It is the best advertised show that ever billed here. Its pictorial and lithograph paper can be seen on all sides, while the many announcement sheets are scattered like snow-flakes in a radius of forty miles. Preparations are being made to entertain a vast gathering on show day as above."

The Seneca *Tribune*, also September 12, had two handouts. "The Great Shows.

"Lemen Brothers are coming in command of the big show. They have a double circus and hippodrome, the finest horses and greatest performers of Europe and America. A big menagerie of wild beasts, quite a number of wild animals entirely new to America. Then an aquarium of sea monsters in huge tanks. Having traveled all over the world they have accumulated many living phenomena of surpassing interest. Altogether it is unquestionably the best show in the country. A grand free balloon ascension is given daily. The magnificent spectacular street pageant is highly spoken of. They will no doubt have immense audiences here, judging from the character of the show and the enthusiasm of the anxious public. Exhibitions will be given at Seneca, September 20.

"The Coming Shows.

"An exchange says, the wonderful horseman Albert Johnson, so far sur-

LEMEN BROTHERS'
WORLD'S BEST SHOWS.

Great Three-Ring Circus! 30 Cage Menagerie!
Roman Hippodrome! Monster Museum!
Oceanic Aquarium and Congress of Living Phenomena!

THE BIGGEST BORN OF BRUTES



RAJAH

THE BIGGEST BRUTE ON EARTH!
THE BIGGEST BORN OF BRUTES!
THE BIGGEST FEATURES EVER!

Two Inches taller than the World's Famous Jumbo. 3000 pounds heavier. Seized at a cost of over \$5,000. A towering giant among his fellows. The very lord of beasts. Taller—Longer—Weight—More—More than any Elephant ever Captured Alive or Brought from his Native Jungle! RAJAH is on Exhibition at all times in the Big Tent. No Extra Charge. One Ticket admits to all the advertised Shows. Ask yourself the question if RAJAH is not the largest living creature that inhabits this created earth!

—WILL EXHIBIT AT—

SENECA

FRIDAY,

Sept. 20.

THE ONLY
Boxing Kangaroo
IN THE WORLD.

Will positively appear in the Ring in a Flamingo Game Contest under Marquis of Queensbury Rules.

POSITIVELY THE ONLY
WHITE SEA LIONS
ON EXHIBITION IN THE WORLD.

Captured on the Koo-koo-vim River in Alaska and taken from the natives while being worshipped.

—SEE THE GOLD-CLEARING—
CORCEOUS FREE STREET PARADE!
REMEMBER DAY AND DATE! TWO GRAND PERFORMANCES DAILY!

passes in intrepid equestrian feats any other rider of the past or present, that a visit to Lemen Brothers' World's Best Shows would well repay the investor of a ticket were one to see nothing else than the brilliant accomplishments of the wizard horseman. The date of the Big Show will be at Seneca is September 20. Everybody is on the tip-toe of expectation. We'll all be there to take care of the children."

Albert Johnson is the only performer named anywhere in the Kansas press.

The exhibitions followed a three day sporting event commemorating the completion of the Seneca water works.

The *Courier-Democrat* had harsh words for the circus: "Lemen Bros. circus showed in this city last Friday and we accord to them the credit of having one of the biggest frauds on the road if their exhibitions here was a fair sample of what they have. The menagerie was even slimmer than the circus. Red lemonade and some stale clown work were prominent features of the deal."

"Lemen Bros exhibited here Friday," according to the *News*. "The high wind made them late, and they did not give the street parade till after one o'clock. It was creditable concerning (sic) the lateness of the season. The horses were as fine a lot of animals we ever saw. They did not show in the evening."

None of Seneca's papers offered a reason for the cancellation of the evening performance, although the weather is a likely cause.

Hiawatha saw Lemen Brothers on September 21.

The Hiawatha *Kansas Democrat* carried handouts quoting alleged stories from Jamestown, July 14, and Winona, July 27. There are several towns in America named Winona and many called Jamestown, but the handouts offered no specifics.

Hiawatha's other newspaper, the *Brown County World*, published a list of advertising rates. "All display advertising 50 cents an inch each insertion. Liberal discounts for time contracts. No display advertising sold on first page.

"Local notices on any page but the first 10 cents a line. First page 50 cents a line.

"Cards of thanks, short, 50 cents each, Long, 75¢. to \$1.

"Resolutions of condolence, endorsement or respect, short \$1; long, \$1.50 to \$2. Church and lodge advertising at half price.

"Exchange, Want, Lost an Found, printed for 25 cents."

The *World* ran the following quote: "Wherever there are lemons there are squeezers-nothing curious about that. But someone has been rude enough to intimate that that is the reason so

many ladies attend Lemen Bros.' circus. Pshaw!--St. Peter *Journal*, Minnesota, August 2."

After the show had come and gone the *World* had only two comments. "There were no elephants in the circus parade.

"Rajah, the big elephant, is positively enormous."

The *Democrat* reported more extensively. "Lemen Bros. circus gave their performance under many difficulties Saturday. The wind was blowing so it was impossible to put the cover on the big tent and it was with much difficulty the trapeze performers went through their parts. They were good even in the wind which was blowing at



Illustration from a Lemen Bros. herald. Pfening Archives.

an alarming rate and had the weather been at all in their favor they would have given the best performance of that kind ever given in the city. Everything as near as possible that was advertised on the bills was carried out. The two little girl riders who are daughters of one of the Lemen Bros., were the best circus riders it has ever been our pleasure to see. We hope when the circus comes this way again the weather will be more in their favor."

The Leavenworth *Standard*, heralding the exhibitions there on Thursday, September 26, ran an abbreviated one column ad featuring Rajah and mentioning Tom, the Boxing Kangaroo. The ad proclaimed, "Admission to all, 25¢."

The day before the exhibitions the *Standard* ran a handout stating: "Lemen Brothers' circus visits Leavenworth tomorrow. The brothers have a double circus and hippodrome; fine horses and performers from Europe and America. In the menagerie there is quite a number of wild animals entirely new to America and an aquarium of sea monsters in tanks. A free balloon ascension is given daily and the street pageant is well spoken of.

"This is Lemen Brothers' twentieth annual tour and the special features this year are Rajah, an elephant two inches taller than Jumbo, and several tons heavier; and 'Fighting Tom,' a scientific boxing kangaroo, who will spar

four rounds Marquis of Queensbury rules with his trainer."

Every circus agent is duty bound to protest the license fee demanded by the authorities, whether the amount be \$1 or \$100. At Leavenworth a serious effort was made, as reported by the *Standard*. "After a long fight for a reduction, Lemen Bros. at 11 o'clock today paid into the city treasurer \$100 for the privilege of exhibiting in the city. Treasurer Fenn issued a license accordingly and everything seemed to end satisfactorily.

"A strong effort was made to have the license fee cut without changing the ordinance. Nine councilmen signed such a petition. The *STANDARD* exposed the scheme and Treasurer Fenn stood pat, giving it out plainly that no license would be issued for less than \$100. Notwithstanding the attitude of the treasurer blocked the game, a further attempt to evade the full license was made this morning.

License Collector Herren got things in readiness to attach the ticket wagon and the police department made preparations to arrest the show people in case they should attempt to show without the necessary license.

"At 11 o'clock a conference was held in the mayor's office. One of the showmen was present. After getting at the true situation he paid the license and settled further dispute."

The *Standard* was an evening paper and was able to give good coverage to the events of the day. "All persons desiring complementaries to the circus today should apply to the city aldermen who seem to have a goodly supply of pasteboards.

"The temperature is a few degrees cooler today and what little wind there is comes from the north. The delightful change was brought about by the refreshing rain that came early last night.

"The crowd of Home [old soldiers] veterans today has been unusually large most of them were attracted by the circus.

"The rain last night gave the paved streets a pretty fair dressing down and effectually settled the clouds of dust that had caused so much extra cleaning up the past three weeks."

The *Standard's* main report appeared on the front page. "Anybody would know this is circus day by the amount of peanut shells on the prominent street corners and at the foot of stairways. The big crowds down town this forenoon and early this afternoon was another good indication of circus day.

"Lemen Bros.' circus arrived about 6 o'clock this morning on the Missouri Pacific and unloaded in the yards on the levee. Between 7 and 8 o'clock all kinds of circus paraphernalia was being hauled through town to 12th and Shaw-

nee streets where the tents were stretched.

"At 11 o'clock immense crowds were on the streets to see the parade; in fact the crowds began gathering as early as 9 o'clock. The schools were dismissed at 11 to give the pupils a chance, but they like thousands of others were disappointed for a time. The parade was delayed till 12:30 p. m. The crowds remained, however, and there were hundreds of empty stomachs.

"The parade took place in the principal down town streets. It was quite lengthy and in every way creditable. The rolling stock was in good condition and there was some fine live stock. There were many cages, but Rajah, the giant elephant, did not come out, in fact there was not an elephant in the parade.

"Hundreds of people followed the line of wagons and animals to the show ground and the big tent was pretty well filled at the afternoon performance. There will be another performance this evening. The show is not at a convenient place and this had kept many away."

A story in the *Standard* following show day indicated that Lemen Brothers' agent may yet have won the licensing war. There is no follow-up to the story below: "The mayor and council have found a way to circumvent the city treasurer. The \$100 license was paid in full by the circus with the understanding that \$50 of the same should be refunded.

"When the question comes up in the council some honest councilman will demand the ayes and nays and place the rogues on record."

On the way home to Argentine Lemen Bros. billed Osawatimie for exhibitions on October 30. The town was recovering from a severe diphtheria epidemic which killed many children, ten in the month of October. Fearing that a large crowd might cause a resurgence of the disease the mayor notified the show that performances would not be permitted. The show train passed through Osawatimie without stopping.

James T. Johnson whose Great Western Circus played Kansas season after season for dismal rewards settled down in 1894 in Jenny Lind, Arkansas, where he once again attempted to fulfill a life long ambition of establishing a winter circus. The *New York Clipper*, December 29, 1894, carried the following want ad: "Wanted Immediately For James T. Johnson's Amphitheater and Standing Circus This Winter. Circus people in all branches, and Concert People, male and female, one Lady Rider, with her own horse, Clowns, Leapers, Tumblers, Wire Walkers, school of

Trained Dogs, Monkeys, Ponies, Etc.

"All Freaks write. Salary must be low. Good board and room will be furnished. Long engagement for good people, until the first of May, then show goes out on the road. Wanted good amateur band of six mouth pieces. Write at once. All letters answered promptly. No fares advanced. Good equestrian director and ring master and trainer write. No bums

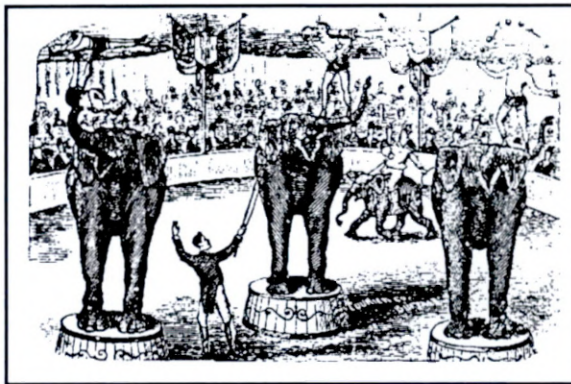


Illustration from a Lemen Bros. herald. Pfening Archives.

need apply. Show is located ten miles from Fort Smith, Ark., at Jenny Lind."

A report in the February 9, 1895 *Clipper* indicates that he did operate a winter show in Jenny Lind and named the following persons: "Report on Johnson's Winter Circus, located at Jenny Lind, Ark.--Ed Baldwin, ringmaster; Kitty and Chas. Baly, trapeze; Mons. Gailer, aerialist; John Albion, hurdle rider; Eugene Poe, clown; Fred Mammoad's trained dogs; Hackett Bros., and Bob Britton and wife. Concert people: Jim Dumont, John Bond, Ed Williams and Prof. Viral."

Johnson attempted an amphitheater winter circus in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, 1886; Pratt, Kansas, 1887; Monett, Missouri, 1888; and Arkansas City, Kansas, in 1890. Medicine Lodge and Pratt were total failures. Arkansas City fared somewhat better thanks to the acquisition of a new partner with new money that made it possible for Johnson to launch a southern tour in the late fall of 1890. The ad in the *Clipper* stated that the show would take the road May 1, 1895, but there is no indication of any Kansas dates.

J. M. Barry's Great American Shows opened the season of 1895 with an evening performance on Thursday, April 25, in Barry's home town of Carbondale, Kansas, twelve miles south of Topeka.

Carbondale's only newspaper, the *Carbondalian*, largely ignored the show during the winter months, the only mention being made on February 16, when it was reported that, "Dad' Berry (sic) proprietor of the Great American

Shows, says that he will start out next spring with his show greatly improved and enlarged, and is now at work on a new tent which will be much larger than his old one.

"Grand Opening. The Great American Circus, which has been in winter quarters in this city will open for the season 1895, on next Thursday night with a series of four entertainments as follows: Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday afternoon Matinee and Saturday night.

"Mr. Berry (sic), the genial manager and our fellow townsman, who has been in the show business for the past twenty-five years, informs us that he will have the best show this season that he ever put on the road, and his people have been selected with the greatest possible care, and nothing but actors of the very best reputation has been employed--regardless of salary.

"The entertainment will be one of constant surprises and delight of every kind and description introducing trained dogs, horses, monkeys and birds, showing to what a high degree animals are capable of being taught. The show will be clean and first-class throughout, something that any man can take his family and feel assured that he will be safe from seeing or hearing anything rough or vulgar.

"Mr. Berry has lived among us for the past five years, and has always been a live progressive citizen, having the respect of all, and he says that in order to give all our citizens a chance to see the show, he will give the four entertainments and cut the price down to ten cents to the big show. Remember the dates. Be on hand to see the grand street parade. Admission 10 cents."

Following the opening the *Carbondalian* reported that, "The Great American Shows had a good attendance at all their performances last week, and our citizens are well pleased, for it was first-class and clean throughout. The only bad luck they had was the balloon ascension, which was to have taken place Saturday afternoon. It was inflated just ready to start when it burst, causing it to collapse. It was an accident that nobody could be responsible for, and was much regretted by all."

Where the show went after the opening and the entire Kansas route remains a mystery. A diligent search has provided no Kansas dates.

Bert Slater, a show employee, returned to Carbondale on May 31, and reported that the show was doing good business.

On July 6 the *Carbondalian* printed the following: "Barry's Great American Circus exhibited at this place Tuesday to fair business. The show is an old time

The most informative report on Barry's Great American appeared in the New York *Clipper*, July 6, "NOTES FROM THE GREAT AMERICAN SHOWS.--We are in our ninth week and business is fair. J. M. Barry is manager and Frankie Barry is treasurer. Roster of the big show: Judy Amondo, equestrian director; Nellaus Bros., triple bars and brother act; Jos. Busslay, stilts and Spanish rings; Kittie Baty, slack wire and flying rings; Daisy Parker, balancing trapeze and rolling globe; Frankie Barry, troop of trained dogs and monkeys; Emery Deloy, contortionist; Paul Garcia, talking and singing clown; Judy Amondo, juggling act and his trained giraffe; Andrew Williams, single traps and sailor perch; Amondo and Williams, revolving Mexican ladder. The band is made up as follows: Prof. Ed Kloepfer, leader; Frank Miller, G. E. Right, Wm. Barrett, Ed. Logan, Geo. Painer, L. M. Barrett and Clarence Gilges. Prof. T. E. Kinkade, aeronaut, is

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followed by their trained ponies, the rear belonging, as usual, to the clown who was driving or rather being led by a small goat. Some features of the performance were very good. The attendance was small, hardly enough to pay their expenses for coming here."

Attendance was small at Clifton May 25, the Clifton *News* reporting that the crowd was "a proportion of 16 to 1, or rather, 1 to 16."

The last known date was Cuba on May 27. The Cuba *Daylight* told the story in one paragraph: "Tryon Brothers' circus, which was to have exhibited here Monday, were unable to put up their canvass on account of the high wind. They arranged to show in Shimek's hall at night, but as no crowd came the performance was not given. From the looks of the outfit it is safe to say that nothing was missed."

An intensive search failed to discover any mention of Tryon Brothers' Railroad Shows following the date at Cuba.

A mystery show played a few dates in the southeastern corner of Kansas, only three of which are known—Galena, Scammon and Cherokee.

To survive a four-day stand in a town such as Galena, a show would need to be very small. Jess Brown's New Colossal Shows exhibited in Galena Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, June 5, 6, 7 and 8. The Galena *Republican* gave the concern a good report.

"Jess Brown's New Colossal show which has been exhibiting here for several days does not make much of a display on the street but the inside work is very clever. We witnessed the performance Thursday evening and were agreeably disappointed. There is not a very weak feature in the whole performance, and there are some very strong ones. The team work by Rice & Henderson, gymnasts and acrobats, is first-class; the juggling, contortion work, slack wire, rope dancing, etc., good. It will pay you to invest ten cents to see it. We would call it a big little show."

The Scammon *Miner* disposed of the exhibitions of June 11, in two sentences: "The circus here Tuesday evening, was fairly well patronized and its patrons pleased. Some very clever acts were performed."

The review in the Cherokee *Sentinel*, signed with the initials "L. J. F.," had high praise for Brown's New Colossal.

"While I am a great admirer of athletic exercises, fast horses and gymnastic performances, I can not exagger-

ate in trying to express the wonderful excellence exhibited at the show Wednesday night [June 12]. It was not well advertised and therefore few attended, but those who did visit this exhibition will sign their names below mine that it one of the best ever produced in the west. To see a man reverse his face and look, laugh and talk to an audience on an exact posterior attitude is a thing seldom if ever seen before. To see that same man convert himself into an exact circle and call for anyone used to rolling a whoop, (sic) and take a barrel stave and use the wonderful contortionist as his whoop, rolling him around the ring, is a thing never before seen. The trapeze performance was far ahead of anything ever exhibited here. The juggling can not be excelled, and to cut short, will say that in every respect it was the best I ever saw."

No further information has been found.

"There were plenty of attractions for the sight-seer Saturday night in Hutchinson. Gentry's show, Salvation Army band concert, and the show at the Star Clothiers," according to the Hutchinson *Daily News*. "Our people could not help but be entertained." The Star company had an unnamed contortionist working in its display window. "The beauty about the show at the Star Clothiers was that it did not cost anything to take it in." The Gentry show was only slightly more expensive.



The coming of the Equine and Canine Paradox was announced in the *News* the day before the opening: "PROF. H. B. GENTRY'S Dogs and Ponies That Almost Talk."

"The above company of all star animal actors will appear in this city under a tent, in the rear of the Santa Fe block. Friday and Saturday nights, June 28th and 29th. Matinee Saturday at 2:30 p. m.

"One reason of Professor Gentry's great success is the fact that, coupled with his remarkable artistic powers is a distinct purity and nobility of nature, an intelligent, honest manhood, rarely met with in other walks of life, and still more rarely met with in the line of animal trainers. This moral integrity is so apparent in his professional work that not to speak of it would be to slight an influence that has distinctively emphasized his art as a trainer. He is certainly the greatest in his line before the public and has the most refined exhibition of educated animals of this day and time. Ponies and dogs that can almost

talk, and at prices so low that everybody can attend. Children, 10 cents; adults, 20 cents."

At noon on the first day of the run Gentry gave a "long" parade and promised a "short" parade before the evening performance and another at noon on the following day with a final "short" parade before the evening show on Saturday. The difference between "long" and "short" was not explained. Gentry remarked in the *News* that, "Every child that did not get to see the parade to-day will have an opportunity if their parents will bring them down to Main street to-night or to-morrow. The matinee to-morrow is especially for the ladies and children. Doors open at 2 o'clock. Don't fail to give the little ones the benefit of the treat of seeing the 'dog show.'"

After the opening the *News* reported: "Professor Gentry's Equine and Canine Paradox gave its first exhibition last evening to a large crowd, considering the threatening appearance of the weather. The performance of these ponies and dogs is simply wonderful. They perform feats which show something far greater than instinct, and that they are possessed of no little reasoning powers. Romeo and Juliet march and counter-march, wheel and march backward in a manner surprising to all beholders. Eureka, the 'Tough,' the little black clown pony, sets the audience in a roar of laughter by his antics whenever he appears in the ring."

"Of the dogs, Major, Omaha, Sport, Barney and Snow Ball, the clown dogs, are the most brilliant, and their cunning not only surprises but delights the audience. The exhibition of high leaping by the hounds was simply marvelous. About a two hours' performance was closed by a beautiful animal picture or living pyramid, in which all the dogs and five of the ponies took part, and was probably one of the best things of the evening. Good music adds much to the attraction."

"A well attended matinee for women and children was given this afternoon."

"To-night will be the last performance and all who have not seen the Equine and Canine Paradox should not miss this last opportunity. The price of admission is a mere bagatelle. Adults, 20 cents; children, 10 cents."

In another column on the 29th the *News* described "A Happy Family."

"One of the most interesting features of Professor Gentry's dog and pony show is to call upon them at their home in the cars. A NEWS reporter called this morning, just after Professor Gentry and his assistants had finished breakfast and the dogs, ponies and monkeys were still picking their teeth."

"Professor Gentry has two cars. The

first car is sixty feet long and is used as a baggage car, kitchen and dining room. The second car is seventy feet long. The front twenty-feet is used as a sleeping car for Professor Gentry and brass band, and the remainder of the car is given over to twenty ponies, sixty-three dogs and three monkeys, and they reside together as one big, happy family.

"There is more to this show than many of our readers would suppose. Besides the dogs, ponies and monkeys mentioned, Professor Gentry carries fifteen people with him and two men in advance. His daily expenses are over \$150. He is now on his way to the Pacific coast and will make a seven months' tour in that country. He will go through Hutchinson on his way back east some time in January, 1896.

"Professor Gentry is a young man, only 30 years of age. He started in his present business at the age of 15, and consequently has now had fifteen years' experience. He trains his animals by using kindness, but still is always firm. The show he gives is highly moral and he caters to the very best class of people wherever he goes. If you have not seen his show, take the little ones to-night."

On Saturday night Gentry's parade was augmented with Hutchinson's Holaday's Military band. "To accommodate Gentry the local band's Saturday evening concert began an hour earlier than usual, after which the entire band marched to the show grounds, followed by the dogs and ponies."

The last word on Gentry's Equine and Canine Paradox was the following paragraph in the *News*: "Gentry's dog and pony show drew another large crowd, Saturday night, and gave a good entertainment. Professor Gentry has a large number of friends in this city who will be glad to see him return, as he expects to do, some time in January, at which time he expects to remodel his show entirely."

On February 5, 1895, the *Topeka Daily Capital* carried a story of a disaster that befell another of the Gentrys: "Prof. William Gentry, well known to Topeka's little folks, lost one monkey, eleven trained ponies and thirty-five educated dogs last week by the burning of his winter quarters at Bloomington, Ind., also \$2,000 worth of paraphernalia. His loss is estimated at \$18,000 and no insurance."

"The Greatest Show of the Modern World" announced its coming with an advertisement in the *Leavenworth Standard*, June 22, 1895. "COMING! THE GREAT WALLACE SHOWS. To Leavenworth On July 1.

The Greatest, Largest, Grandest and Best of AMERICA'S AMUSEMENT ENTERPRISES Finest Horses and Great-

est Array of Circus Talent of Any Show on Earth. NO WONDER IT IS GREAT. 3 Rings! 2 Stages! 1/2 Mile Race Track! Colossal Menagerie! Royal Aquarium! 4 Trains! 10 Acres Canvas! 20,000 Seats! 1,500 Employees! \$4,000.00 Daily Expenses! 100 Phenomenal Acts! 20 Hurricane Races! 25 Clowns! 6 Bands! 50 Cages! 15 Open Dens! Herd of Elephants! Drove of Camels! World's Renowned Performers! Every Great Act Known! CAPITAL--\$3,000,000.00 Excursions Will Be Run.

"On every line of travel to enable visitors from a distance to attend the ex-



Benjamin E. Wallace as pictured in the 1895 route book. Pfening Archives.

hibitions of this, the greatest show of the modern world. Trains will arrive in time to witness the monster, majestic, spectacular, grand, free STREET PARADE ONE MILE LONG. 50---Free Exhibitions Daily---50 Experienced Detectives in Attendance. They are constantly on the watch to protect the public from the operations of gamblers and swindlers. REMEMBER THE DATE."

The ad boasted of 20,000 seats, an exaggeration that was echoed in a handout in a separate column on the 22d. The handout also claimed 10 acres of canvas and a menagerie valued at nearly \$1,000,000. "The beasts for the most part have been imported direct by the show from the Congo Free State through their agent, Matewayo Komatsu, who has his hunters all through that country." Abruptly changing the subject the handout proclaimed that, "No gambling devices are tolerated by the Wallace show."

Gambling was rampant on the Wallace circus in 1890 and 1891, so flagrant that the entire show was arrested by the Kansas National Guard. Wallace played Kansas in 1892 and 1893 under the title of Cook & Whitby. Ben Wallace avoided Kansas in 1894. The public

memory is notoriously short and when in 1895 the Great Wallace Shows returned to Kansas the sins of earlier seasons were largely forgotten.

The *Standard* was an evening paper and on show day ran an interesting account of the day. "B. E. Wallace's big show arrived in Leavenworth last night from Kansas City. Early this morning a small army of workmen took possession of the old Gun club ground on South Fourth street, just north of Limit street, and by 10 o'clock it had the appearance of a tented field. Acres were quickly put under canvas and there was a general hustle all over the grounds. Show men as a rule are the best hustlers on earth."

The show had originally planned on exhibiting on the Ft. Leavenworth reservation, but a group of hackmen persuaded the army to ban the circus from the reservation. The hackmen wanted a site not so readily accessible to the street car lines in the hope of increasing their income on show day. The Gun club was close but not on the line.

"The street pageant of the Wallace show was given at 11 o'clock," according to the *Standard*, "and was one of the very best ever seen in Leavenworth. Notwithstanding several animal cages and wagons were not brought out, the pageant was nearly a mile in length and attracted favorable comment all along the line. The wagons, the chariots, the horses and the rest of the paraphernalia were up to date. It was a clean, business-like street display and suggested no features that the show does not produce. The horses received a good deal of attention and the caged animals were an exceptionally fine looking lot. There were three brass bands and a steam callopie brought up rear as usual. The people who took part in the parade looked considerable better than the average circus performer. One of the big elephants is kept in chains now. He went on a tear in an Indiana town not long ago and tried to outdo a small-sized cyclone. He knocked his keeper down three times in an attempt to kill him. The biggest elephant of the herd weighs about 300 pounds more than Jumbo did in his best day; but the Wallace elephant is not so tall by two or three inches as was Barnum's monster.

"Thousands of people crowded the principal streets down town to see the parade. Most of them patiently awaited its coming for from one to two hours. Everywhere there was a jam and a push. All kinds of people were out in force and the rural districts were especially well represented. It was one of the biggest crowds seen in Leavenworth for a long, long time.

"The big circus tent was pretty well filled at the performance this afternoon and an even larger crowd is expected for

this evening. Mr. Wallace expressed himself this afternoon as being well pleased with the business prospect here. He considers Leavenworth an excellent circus town and knows he is sure to make some money when he comes here.

"The doors will be open at 7 o'clock for the night performance which does not begin till 8 o'clock. During this interval an orchestra of forty pieces will render high class music that will be worth making an extra effort to hear. Mr. Wallace will not permit the evening performance to be abridged in the least. It is in every respect the same program as in the afternoon. The performance lasts two hours and ten minutes.

"A STANDARD reporter was shown through the show this morning by J. H. Harrison, Mr. Wallace's press agent. The enterprise travels on its own railroad trains, employs 400 people and carries nearly 300 horses. It is a big concern every way and is considered about the best paying show in existence. B. E. Wallace is sole owner and goes with the show everywhere.

"The daily expenses amount to about \$3,000 and this is the show's twelfth year. It is what the public knows as a three-ring circus and a person is kept more than busy keeping track of all the features.

"The circus tent proper is 500 feet long and seats 7,000 people. There are a dozen smaller tents. The menagerie tent comes next to the circus tent in size. Every foot of the canvas is new this year, though some of it may not look new. It got mud and water stained at Omaha a few days ago."

It was certainly a big day for the street car company.

"The Electric road did a land office business yesterday and last night. It was one of the road's big days. All available cars were in use and they were crowded day and night. A conservative estimate of fares rung up puts the number at about 9,000.

"Seven cars were run between Delaware street and the circus ground and Mr. Wallace of the show expressed his gratification at the manner in which the crowds were handled. Not a single se-

rious accident occurred in connection with the cars during the day and night."

The final word on Leavenworth's holiday appeared in the police report July 2. "Detectives Jones and Sutton yesterday afternoon arrested D. H. Gillespie on the circus ground for flim-flamming Mrs. May Lewis of Metropolitan avenue out of \$2.50. Judge Aller fined him \$5 this morning, John Malloy was fined \$5 for drunkenness and William McBride was treated in the same way. J. M. Harris and Pat Gallagher, arrested for vagrancy, had their cases continued."

Wallace played Atchison on July 2.

The June 22 Atchison *Weekly Patriot* carried a handout relating the execution of Tobe, a large elephant. Tobe, according to the handout, had a long circus career.

"He had proudly trodden the greatest streets in America in parades, from Broadway in New York to Market street in San Francisco. More boys and girls had been on his back than on any other elephant in the world."

This Wallace ad appeared in the *Wichita Daily Beacon* on June 29, 1895. Kansas State Historical Society.

Elephant rides in the 19th Century and in most of the 20th were ignored by the Kansas press or did not occur.

A change came over Tobe resulting from a broken heart. "Princess, a big female elephant to whom he was devoted and who

had borne him several baby elephants, was killed in a train wreck of the circus south of McGregor, Iowa, two years ago."

Tobe's sorrow was equal to that of Jumbo's widow, Alice. "For a long time Tobe brooded over his loss. All the arts known to keepers were tried in an endeavor to bring him out of his deep melancholia, but with little success. He did the duties required of him in a listless sort of way. But now he had to be driven to it and finally refused."

At Conewa, Missouri, in 1894, Tobe seized his long-time keeper, "Shorty," and pinned him to the ground between his tusks, but, "Shorty" was rescued by the head keeper.

In winter quarters while securely chained Tobe attacked and nearly killed another handler. Life was no longer safe around Tobe and it was decided to execute the beast.

"He was removed to another building. Two slip nooses of immense ropes were adjusted about the big fellow's neck. Two blocks and tackles were obtained and secured one to each noose. Then a team of immense heavy draft horses was attached to each block and tackle. A man was stationed at the head of each horse. The keeper stood in front, pistol in hand, to fire as a signal when each horse should be suddenly urged forward.

"Bang! went the pistol; the men started the horses, there was a tightening of ropes. A look of defiant astonishment came into Tobe's eyes. As the ropes drew tighter he braced himself and belled forth his rage. He tugged and twisted with all the desperation of his great strength, but it was useless. Four powerful horses had the grip on him, and he was slowly choking to death. He got his breath in gasps now. More urging of the horses and the ropes sank into his throat. His eyes became dull and closed slowly. He reeled and staggered, then fell heavily. After a time his trunk began to stiffen. There was a compulsive twitching of his entire frame, and then the ropes slackened. The keeper searched for his jugular vein and pronounced him dead."

The hide was sent to a taxidermist. "With a derrick the remainder of the big body was hoisted into an immense boiler, built immediately for the purpose, and for many days it was parboiled till all the flesh came away from the bones. These are now being still further treated. They will be mounted and Mr. Wallace will present the skeleton and the stuffed skin to a museum."

Fact or fiction?

A later handout related the further adventures of "Shorty" when a tiger in winter quarters escaped its cage. "Patsy," the big cat's trainer, coaxed the animal back into the cage, but the trauma suffered by "Shorty" was horrendous.

Following the exhibitions of July 2, the *Patriot* reported that, "Of the thirty-two young women employed by Mr. Wallace twenty-one of them are married and their husbands travel with the show. Several of the women get \$100 per week."

"Mrs. Wallace, wife of the proprietor of the circus which was in this city yesterday," according to the *Patriot*, "travels with the show and it is she who looks after the morals of the young women employed as performers. Mrs. Wallace also sees to it that the performers keep their costumes in good shape. If a performer appears in the

COMING!

THE GREAT WALLACE SHOWS

TO WICHITA,
On FRIDAY, JULY 5th,

THE GREATEST, LARGEST, GRANDEST AND
BEST OF

AMERICA'S AMUSEMENT ENTERPRISES

FINEST HORSES AND GREATEST ARRAY OF CIRCUS TALENT
Of Any Show on Earth.



NO WONDER IT IS GREAT!

5 Rings, 8 Stages, 2-1/2 Mile Race Track, Colossal Menagerie; Royal
Aquarium, 4 Trolleys, 10 Acres of Canvas, 30,000 Seats, 1,500 Em-
ployees, 80,000 Daily Expenses, 100 Phenomenal Acts, 20 Harri-
cane Rides, 25 Clowns, 6 Bands, 20 Cages, 15 Open Cages, Herd
of Elephants, Drive of Camels, World's Renowned Performers,
Every Great Act Known.

CAPITAL - - \$3,000,000.00

EXCURSIONS WILL BE RUN

On every line of travel to nearby stations from a distance to attend the exhibition
of this, the greatest show of the modern world. Tickets will arrive in time to wit-
ness the monster, maulers, spectacular, grand free

STREET PARADE ONE MILE LONG!

50 FREE EXHIBITIONS DAILY

EXPERIENCED DETECTIVES IN ATTENDANCE. They are constantly
on the watch to protect the public from the operations of gamblers and swindlers.

REMEMBER THE DATE

ring with a spot on his tights he is fined \$2."

It isn't often that a politician has to buy a ticket to the circus, but, according to the *Patriot*, "Every Atchison councilman and city employe who attended Wallace's circus here yesterday paid fifty cents for the privilege just like common mortals. This has not happened before in years. Ordinarily the city clerk works the circus agent for 'comps' but Mr. Wallace's agent refused to give up. He got mad because the city would not reduce the license from \$75 to \$50. He vowed a solemn vow that all city fathers would have to pay to see the elephant and they did."

Ben Wallace was an enthusiastic advertiser. The Atchison *Daily Globe* reported June 26, that, "A third bill car came in this a. m. and proceeded to put red advertising matter all over the town and country. Nobody has been overlooked; not a man, woman or child can be found for miles who does not know all about it. If this show is up to its advance brigades it is the greatest that ever came to this place. Three cars, each a movable house of splendor, have come and gone, and each has left hundreds of dollars worth of paper. The equal of this show's bills was never put out before. In originality and number of designs it is the finest ever got up here. This show has fifty-two different pictures in its bills, within eight of being twice what the next big advertising show has. This car is managed by Mr. W. K. Peck, a gentleman. T. Haggerty is the boss bill poster, and he is ably supported by eighteen stars, as their word indicates. It costs money to advertise as this show has done, and it takes a big show to make such money, consequently the public may feel confident that it is to be treated to an entertainment worth seeing.

"Hide your souvenir spoons," the *Globe* warned, "The thieves traveling in the wake of a coming circus did a big business in St. Joe [Missouri] yesterday [June 26], making a haul of \$500 at one place."

Many circus fans would agree with the editor of the *Globe* when he proclaimed, "The most interesting part of a circus costs no admission fee. It is watching the circus unload from the cars in the morning, pitch the tent, and get ready for the parade. The boys should wake their sisters up early tomorrow and take them with them."

Most boys would consider a tag-along sister to be cruel and unusual punishment, but perhaps the editor never had a sister.

The Atchison police were determined to protect all crooks from temptation by "arresting every suspicious character they find. They have arrested half a

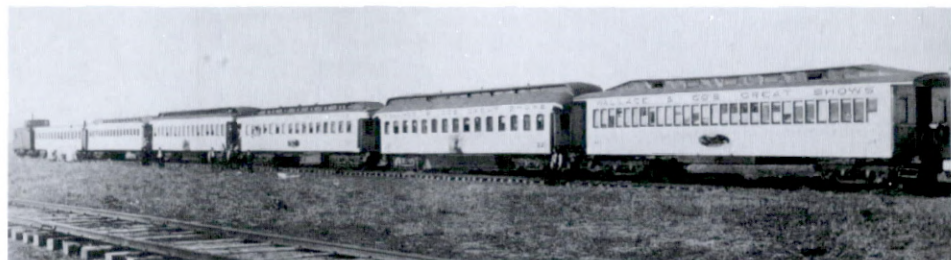
dozen to-day [July 2], and will probably have the jail full by night."

A down-town ticket office was set up show day at S. F. Stoll's drugstore.

A handout written by press agent Harrison described Ben Wallace as "not cross and intimidating, as a good many people think a showman should be. He owns five other shows of less importance than the one in Atchison today, but is so modest that you would not recognize him as an important person unless you happened to notice the big diamond in his necktie. He usually sits near the main entrance before performances."

The "five other shows" were never named.

Harrison also claimed that Wallace owned forty lions which were leased to other shows.



Six sleeping cars of the Great Wallace Circus train. Pfening Archives.

"Between 7 and 8 o'clock this evening," according to Harrison, "Professor Goetze's band of forty pieces will render a concert of high class music, and if you want to hear something fine, you should go early."

The *Globe* had much to report. "Get off the Tenth Street line at Santa Fe Street, and you will be as near the show grounds as the cars can take you.

"A lot of Atchison society girls got up at 4 o'clock this morning, and went down to the railroad yards to see the circus animals.

"I want to go to the circus so bad,' we heard an old man say to-day, 'that I bet it rains to-night.'

"There is an old animal at the show grounds in the shape of a dog faced mule.

"The largest crowd which has visited Atchison at one time from Missouri for years crossed the bridge this morning. The entire Missouri bottoms seemed to have turned out to see the circus, and the bridge was almost blocked several times."

After the show had gone the *Globe* still had circus news.

"There was a large amount of snap advertising at the circus last night. The elephants had advertising banners on them, and there were advertising wagons in the procession. Two different men came out to talk about certain

firms, charging each \$3. A card on an elephant costs \$10 one time. There is no more effective way of throwing money away.

"A good sideshow 'blower' makes \$4 to \$5 a day; there were two very good ones with the Wallace side show yesterday. It is a very good day when a sideshow takes \$200 from early in the morning until late at night. The 'blower' is the man who stands in front, and tells what a great show he has. Circus men regard all those who go into the side show as jays. When confidence men follow a show, they turn nearly all their tricks in the sideshow, arguing that any man who will visit a sideshow may be easily touched. The 'concert' oftener plays to \$25 than to \$50.

"Remember, good people,' said a man in front of the circus tent last night,

'that nothing will be sold in the big tent; neither lemonade, strawberry wine nor peanuts.' Upon the inside were a lot of men selling strawberry wine, lemonade and peanuts, and yelling that nothing would be sold on the outside.

"The Atchison reformers should have cracked down on the Wallace show yesterday. The show has a bar on the train, and the performers can have beer whenever they want it.

"As soon as you get into the circus tent at night the men commence tearing it down. An Effingham man made a big roar last night when he found the menagerie had been removed during the big show. He counted on taking it in after the performance.

"The peddler of cushions with the circus is an artist. He hands ladies a cushion as they are about to sit down, which they take, supposing they are free. He also hands one to the ladies' escort, and when they are comfortably seated, he demands 10 cents each. He worked all the boys last night.

"A woman can never disguise herself in a man's clothes so successfully that people can't see at a glance that she is not a man. There is a sort of shrinking in her walk, as if her skirts still hampered her. But men can often get up clever make-ups as women that deceive people. The woman who took part in the bicycle performance at the circus last night was a man. He handled himself much like a woman, but had forgotten to pad his legs."

In police court Judge Smith fined Frank Robinson \$1.50 for drunkenness. Will Shea was fined \$4.50 for being-drunk and assaulting Chris Anderson, a "jay." Anderson was ordered out of town or he would be fined for attracting flies. "The flies seemed to dote on Anderson. Hundreds of them swarmed around him in the police station. A man named Black forfeited \$5 for being drunk. A number of suspicious characters who were arrested about the show grounds yesterday were given light fines.

In conclusion the *Globe* stated that, "The Wallace circus gave excellent satisfaction yesterday. It is a big show and fully as good as Forepaugh or Sells Bros."

The first posters were posted in Topeka on June 3, heralding the exhibitions of July 3.

On July 1 the Topeka *State Journal* warned its readers that a large gang of thieves and housebreakers were following the Wallace show. The *Journal* quoted a St. Joseph, Missouri, paper stating that on show day in that city "three business houses were rolled in open daylight, several residences were gone through and there were any number of pockets picked and holdups."

Topeka's Chief of Police Wilkerson, on show day ordered all vagrants to be arrested. More than fifty were locked up.

According to the Topeka *Daily Democrat*, when the show trains, coming from Atchison on the Santa Fe, stopped in North Topeka before crossing the Kansas river, Chief Wilkerson was on hand to greet them.

"A strong police force met the train at the North Topeka station, and after a sharp contest succeeded in arresting a half dozen or more 'suspects' who were added to the large number of tramps or crooks already in the lock up."

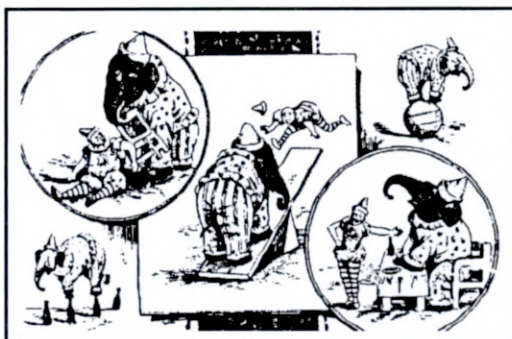
Some of Ben Wallace's victims from previous years were surprised to learn from the *Journal* that Wallace was good to his mother.

"Besides being the owner of three or four other shows smaller than this one, and reputedly worth \$5,000,000, Mr. Wallace is a very agreeable man and good to his mother. The family lives at Peru, Ind., where Mr. Wallace used to be a horseman. He is the third of eleven children and the family was very poor when the father died. Twelve years ago Mr. Wallace took the single step from the horse business into the show business and now his mother lives in a palace and has lots of servants. For the first two years the show was a wagon show.

"The Wallace show seems to be a very good one and has an interesting menagerie. There are two rings and a platform in the big tent and it seats several thousand people."

At the beginning of the story quoted above, the *Journal* reported that, "Kansas Avenue and the near streets were crowded this morning a considerable time before the parade was to arrive and the crowd was not disappointed by a short procession. There may have been better in Topeka, but very few of them have been appreciated more, so hungry were the people for an exhibition of the kind. The music was furnished by three bands and the inevitable calliope, played better perhaps than usual.

"The Wallace tents are pitched on the vacant lots just north of the fairgrounds on Harrison street. It fills the large va-



This illustration appeared in an 1895 Wallace herald. Pfening Archives.

cant place and is somewhat crowded. The show carries four hundred people and three hundred horses. The latter are beauties and the most insignificant of them receives better care than the average man does at a cheap boarding house.

"The reader will be surprised to hear that the long tents in which the tent hands are fed present a cleaner appearance than a good many lunch counters and the men are fed very well. They have roast beef, bread and vegetables and on the Fourth of July pie. They will have pie at Emporia tomorrow. The officers, managers, and performers are fed in Mr. Wallace's cars in the railroad yards and say they live high and have pie every day.

"One of the best features of the Wallace shows is the very obliging press agent, J. H. Harrison, who showed a *JOURNAL* reporter about the grounds today, and he says that the tent will positively not be torn down until the full performance is given tonight. 'Money we get in the evening' he says, 'is just as good as the money we get in the afternoon, and we give the same big show for it.'

"There seems to be no gamblers or grafters about the show grounds. 'We are in the circus business,' said Mr. Harrison, 'not the gambling business, and if you see anything of the kind tell the people.'"

Topekan "Red" Laird who frequently worked for Willie Sells explained to a *Journal* reporter how "graft" works in the circus world. "Red" was familiar with the Wallace organization.

"FIX THE 'FLATTIES.'"

"'Graftin is a good ting' said Topekan Red Laird who traveled last year with Wallace's show, 'as long as you're working under protection. When it's fixed so's when night comes the coppers gets dair bit out of the winnings, it's safe. There ain't no circus on the road but what's got 'em, and the circus mugs get dair bit every day too, because they don't do the carrivan (sic) no good. When they gets troo wid a jay he ain't got money enough to ride home on, say nothing of going in the main show.'

"'Who is the man that manages the police?' the reporter asked.

"'We have a fixer or a squarer, or anything you choose to call him. He's generally a lawyer what's gone wrong. Those with gray hair does best. When the circus strikes a town de fixer goes up town and sees the main blokes of the burg and meets the chief of the coppers. Both of his hip-pockets is sticking out wid circus tickets and he's got a roll of dough as big as a sheriff's at the end of his term.'

"'What is a 'flattie'?"

"'Just a common copper on de beat. A grafter tinks it's a disgrace to stand a pinch by anything less'n a sergeant or a captain. Well as I was saying, along in de afternoon de chief he comes down to de lot and de fixer meets him ad de door. Someone gives de office to slough, that's for the grafters to duck awhile. Den de fixer and de main copper takes a booze and de fixer slips anuder bill wid a saw-buck on each end in de officer's mitt and tells him "send your flatties out in de country to look for de shell men," and he does it.

"'Den de fixer says: 'Milly Cheese is about to do her wonderful bareback ack, don't you want to see it?' "Does she wear tights?' asks de chief. "Yes," says de fixer. "All right," says de chief and away day go over inter de big show, and once more de side show and de farmers is left to the grafters to hide de little black ball what has won millions of coin from de guys."

A woman reporter for the *Journal* who wrote under the by-line of Becky Sharp had an educational day at the circus and reported on what she learned.

"'Patsy Forepaugh' has charge of the menagerie and is worshipped by every small boy who ever carried water to the elephants. Forepaugh's baptismal name is J. G. Meagher, but because of his training with the Forepaughs and his twenty-five years experience with animals, he is best known as Patsy Forepaugh.

"We used to always have a trainer ride in with the lions and other animals, but the novelty has worn off somewhat, and we don't do it any more.

"You see that cage of four lions? Well, that is too full for a trainer to ride in. If a man can sit in the middle of the cage, and the animals can move around him without touching him, all right, but accidental contact will often encourage them to the dangerous point.

"Over there is the white camel, with two humps, made famous in 'Ben Hur.'

"I said a reluctant farewell to Mr. Forepaugh and followed Mr. Harrison to the dressing tent, where the horses were already being ranged in the front part for the grand entrance.

"The back part was divided into two rooms with a corridor between them, and it was into the ladies' dressing room that I was curious to go.

"Accordingly I was introduced to Mrs. Hughes, wife of the manager of the hippodrome and herself one of the best bareback riders.

"The room into which she ushered me was triangular, the round side being about fifty feet and the other two about thirty. Ranged around this sat fifteen women and girls all before trunks, busily making up for the grand entree.

"Mrs. Hughes said: 'Ladies, this is Miss Sharp, who wants to see circus people behind the scenes.' All of them greeted me courteously.

"I hope they will pardon me when I say that it was a surprise to me to find them very much like other people. They are all under thirty and nice looking, many of them remarkably pretty.

"Just now they are having a merry time,' Mrs. Hughes explained, 'because of Samsoni the strong woman having put sugar on the girls' trunks to attract the flies. Samsoni speaks German, French and some other languages, but we are just teaching her English. She seems to learn our little tricks and jokes on each other as quickly as anyone else.

"When the dressing tent is pitched,' said Mrs. Hughes, 'our trunks are set in place and it is always the same place according to number for the whole season.

"First in the row sits Mamie Fisher, who does the club swinging turn; her husband is the large trapeze performer.

"Young?

"O yes, we are all under thirty. Why should we look old we take good care of ourselves and our exercise is most beneficial.

"Do we read? Yes. Almost anything from Shakespeare to Trilby.

"Ella Martin, the smaller of the pair of contortionists, is quite pretty out of the ring. Her companion, Anne Dare, is also a plump pretty girl. Mrs. Powers, who does the bicycle turn with her husband and his brothers, tells me that she

has a little four year old girl at home in New York city.

"Blanche Reed as she is known in the bills is proud of the fact that she is the granddaughter of the veteran showman Dan Rice and is a bare back rider by instinct. She is Mrs. McCrea in real life.

"Next to Miss Reed is Miss Lottie Aymar of the famous Aymar family of riders. Miss Aymar has just come in from taking supper with Mrs. Sells-Greenspan [Allen Sells widow], with whom she once traveled.

"It does not take her long to make up, since her hair is naturally curly. Circus performers don't wear wigs.

"But the second overture has sounded and the girls are emerging from a more or less chrysalis state of en deshabille to the full fledged butterfly.

"A wild scramble ensues as somebody cries 'mail man,' and for a few moments everything is left for letters.

Lottie Aymar, featured lady rider on Wallace in 1895. Pfening Archives.

"Their world is like our world, not so bad as we sometimes make it."

Kansas Governor E. N. Morrill, State Treasurer Otis L. Atherton, Attorney General F. B. Dawes, Associate Justice W. A. Johnston and Police Commissioner P. I. Bonebrake, apparently unable to pay the fifty cents for a ticket, solicited free admission at the ticket wagon. An attache of the circus escorted them to their free seats.

The July 4 Topeka *Daily Capital* reported: "The circus has been to town and although the Wallace shows is not so large as some it was a very up-to-date exhibition. There were five clowns, the usual number of acrobats, men, women and boys who performed wonderful feats on horse back, living pictures, a woman boxer, and all the rest. The costumes were bright and fresh looking and the women younger and prettier than Topeka circus goers have seen in many a year.

"Although there were only two rings and a center platform, the small boy complained that he could not see half as much as he wanted to, and an adult spectator, who was in a retrospective mood, recalled with a sigh of longing the thrill of genuine pleasure which the old one-ring show of his boyhood awakened.

"The 'living pictures' were a man and a woman who did some very good posing

on a revolving pedestal. Two beautiful horses which might have taken lessons from an ideal dancing master, so gracefully did they execute the two-step, and go through the evolutions of the waltz, followed the 'pictures.'

"Two graceful hounds and two curly black bears showed off their equestrianism in fine style and were loudly applauded. The little Japs were as good as they always are and so were the big ones. They did thrilling things in mid-air, and the little fellows made themselves into balls and were jumped up and down and whirled around on the feet of the larger performers.

"There was a trio of roller skaters, two men and a woman, dressed in red satin, who did some pretty skating, besides the funny man who pretended to be awkward although he managed to do more astonishing things than any of the others. These same performers rode bicycles and did some juggling.

"The strong woman was a blonde and in her street costume looks very much as other people do. She came out in pale blue tights and went through a series of gymnastics with heavy iron weights which aggregated 600 pounds in weight. Before leaving the ring she adjusted a steel bar across her shoulders, weighted on either end by iron balls, the whole weighing 220 pounds, from which two good sized men were suspended.

"A musical donkey with red hair-ribbons sang an operatic selection, and won more applause than anybody. The boxing match between Miss Work and her brother, somebody said was an example of the 'new woman.'

"Perhaps the very best feature of the exhibition was the performance on the slack rope by a slender auburn haired man whose real name is Park Byers.

"The 'grand finale' came with the races, which were unusually good for circus races. There seemed to be honest efforts on the part of riders and drivers to finish first.

"The afternoon audience filled only about half the seats; the evening audience was somewhat larger.

"The tents were pitched on the vacant lots at the corner of Fourteenth and Harrison streets, which materially cut off the receipts of the street car company, as the distance from town was so short that many walked.

"The entire outfit, including the side



shows and stands of various kinds was unusually bright and clean and fakirs were not much in evidence.

"Before midnight the city of tents had been dismantled and everything was ready for the trip to Emporia where the circus is to show today. From Emporia it will go to Wichita, from Wichita to Hutchinson, from Hutchinson to Pueblo, and thence to Florence, Cripple Creek and Denver."

The only circus connected person to be arrested was W. Rawson, charged with being a pickpocket. Rawson claimed to be Wallace's head cook. Unable to make bond he was bound over for trial. There is no confirmation that Rawson was or was not head cook on the Wallace show, but when arrested he was carrying three boxes of strawberries.

Topeka was a bad date for Ben Wallace who told a *Journal* reporter that "he would leave about \$400 in the town. He has had a lot of bad business this season, mostly on account of the weather, as he has struck a large number of rainy days, and is out about \$14,000 on the season so far as it has gone."

"The tent was not more than half full in the afternoon, and in the evening two thousand people in a seven thousand tent were not crowded."

Only one of the Emporia papers ran a handout previous to the exhibitions of Thursday, July 4. All three papers ran a two-column illustrated advertisement, the same ad used for all Kansas dates, varied only by different cuts. Scattered through the news columns were short inexpensive paragraphs. The following appeared in the *Emporia Times*: "Every animal of note may be seen in the Great Wallace Shows."

"It would be hard to find another array of employees the size of the force carried by the Great Wallace Shows, which would be so universally courteous. All questions are answered cheerfully and politely. No man in Mr. Wallace's service ever gets a second chance to be brusque to his patrons."

"The Great Wallace Shows is the best equipped circus in the world."

"The finest horses of any show on earth is the proud boast of the Great Wallace Shows."

"A live cat orchestra (sic) with the Great Wallace Shows."

"The performances are never cut short because it rains when the Great Wallace Shows are in town. All the great canvases are water proof and the comfort of guests and performers is assured."

"The trained animal circus for the

children at the Great Wallace Shows."

The items in the *Emporia Daily Republican* were more informative. "The post office will close at 10 o'clock tomorrow for the day. The carriers will make the usual morning delivery."

"The circus is coming!"

"The morning base ball game tomorrow will be called at 9 o'clock and be finished before the circus parade. The afternoon game will begin at 4 o'clock."

"The Great Wallace show exhibits here Thursday, July 4th."

"Business in Emporia to-morrow will be about half and half. The dry goods, notion and clothing stores will generally close at 11 or 12 o'clock, but there is no united action among the grocers. Some of them will not open their doors at all, while others will remain open all day."

There were three great holidays in



Great Wallace riders Blanche Reed and Reno McCree as pictured in the 1895 route book. Pfening Archives.

Kansas in the 19th Century--the Fourth of July, Christmas and circus day. To have two of them piled upon one another--July 4 and circus day--was nearly an unbearable delight.

On show day the *Republican* reported that, "The Wallace circus was all right. The attendance at both the afternoon and night performance was large and the managers were well satisfied with the patronage they received here. There were several new and interesting features and the show throughout was one of the best that ever visited Emporia. The crowd of fakirs and robbers that the people expected to be flocking with the show did not appear and no trouble was reported."

Rain began to fall about the time the night performance let out. Officially two inches fell, but many private gauges registered four.

Most editors had only praise for the Wallace show but the *Emporia Gazette* thought differently.

"The circus yesterday was very much on the bun; the worst thing about it was the clown who went around and held up

a lot of merchants for from \$1 to \$10 for putting their names in his jokes; this is one of the most effective ways of burning money that there is. The street parade was not nearly so interesting as an Alliance parade, and the elephants and camels were plastered over with 'foreign' advertising. The procession was mostly bands, and the bands couldn't play in the same class with the Americus [Kansas] Silver Cornet band; it was all triple tonguing on clarinets by tent hands who thought they were out among the jays and didn't take the trouble to button up their red and gilt coats over their undershirts. There were no very good performers in the ring, and the best artists were with the side show; they were working all sorts of skin games, they were at least smooth people there; when Tom O'Conner came

on the ground the whole outfit knew that he was a deputy sheriff, and they broke their backs being good to him while he was on the ground; everything closed up tight, and it was as quiet in the sideshow as it would be at an Epworth league meeting; one of the worst of the sharks stepped up and called O'Conner by name and asked him where he could find a priest, and said that he was very contrite of spirit because he had not been to mass for two weeks; the crowd evidently knew

Tom went away, for the games opened again, and when he came back, they closed air tight.

"The little Jap who tickled the women and made them suck in wind by his wonderfully dangerous performances is the most profane man on the grounds; he made a tent hand turn his head yesterday, swearing at him; the Japs and the best of the bare back people and the woman who juggles the cannon balls form the aristocracy of the show; they would no more think of eating with the common herd around the circus than a Union Street woman would think of eating with the 'hired girl'; the tent hands and the side-show freaks and the fakirs and the animal keepers are greatly despised by the aristocracy. The only 'citizens' who can break into this set, is the advance agent, the manager and the press agent. It is so in all circuses. The Wallace show has an unusual number of tough people with it, but also has some decent people. The performers in the ring, are usually honest people, as the times go, and there is nothing more public, nor scandalous to be found behind the scenes of a circus. The women keep close in their dressing rooms, and a man would be mobbed, if he got gay; the clowns are mostly the husbands of

performers, and the women behind the scenes do fancy work, and teach their children; they are not flirts, as the country people imagine, and because they wear tights they are not necessarily totally depraved; the women generally grow up in tights; the woman who rode the bareback horse in the north ring, told a reporter that she had worn tights ever since she was seven years old; her husband was the clown who followed the horse yelling and whooping and would have caught her if she had fallen. She has the greatest contempt for the jays who tried to make signs at her, and her little daughter is learning to read and do the multiplication table every afternoon when the show is over. Circus people do not marry so early nor so often as theatrical people, and only two of the Wallace women had been divorced."

Did William Allen White have burned oatmeal for breakfast?

"There was not one drunk arrested in this town yesterday," the *Gazette* reported in another column, "although there was a Fourth of July, two ball games and a circus in town. The city library was crowded again this afternoon; that is the kind of town Emporia is, and if you don't like it move out; there is not a vacant house on the town site and a whole lot of decent people are trying to move in. Don't kick Emporia; it is the best town in Kansas and it's enough sight better than you are. Move on; get out; skip; jump off the earth; Emporia is all right."

Perhaps the toast, also, was burned.

On show day the *Republican* reported, "The Wallace show did something that a circus was never known to do before--it made its parade on time. It swung into Commercial street from Fifth avenue at 10:30. The crowd extended far out into the street on either side and the parade could barely move. The circus made a very creditable showing, their horses being the best ever seen in a parade here. There was a line of animal wagons and all kinds of animals.

"Notwithstanding the immense crowd, the large number of vehicles on the streets, and the constant booming of fire crackers, not a single accident has yet been reported. The crowd was a good-natured one and the one idea--to have a good time--predominated."

The *Wichita Beacon* gave show day, July 5, good coverage.

"At Florence yesterday Wallace's show met with an accident and this is the reason that they were so late in getting underway here.

"They say near Florence last night during a terrific storm and while their trains were enroute to Wichita, a 'wild' switch engine ran into the second section of their train at a branch crossing,

completely tearing away one side of the 80-foot elephant car and wrecking the trucks, though not injuring the elephants.

"The clearing away of the debris and reloading of the elephants on other cars are assigned by them as reasons for their late arrival.

"At 1 o'clock the street parade began



No. 1 advance car manager W. M. Dale as pictured in the 1895 Wallace route book. Pfenning Archives.

to move. There were three bands and a calliope in the long procession. The gilded cage and display wagons made splendid showing and interspersed were glittering cavalcades of horsemen and horsewomen. The dens of the menagerie were open and the delighted exclamations of the onlookers as they passed along gave evidence of the interest which they excited. The horses were probably the finest ever sent out with a circus.

"Riverside park presented a scene of great activity this morning. The great canvas tents were up in an incredibly short time after the work began and, in spite of the delay in the arrival of the second section of the train occasioned by yesterday's accident at Florence, all was in readiness at the hour announced for the beginning of the show. Wallace's is a 3-ring circus. The main tent is 500 feet long and will seat comfortably 7,000 people."

The review, which was undoubtedly the work of a press agent, had praise for the bounding rope act of Park Byers and the amusing "spade" dance of Andrew Downey. Benton Hughes was acknowledged as director of the hip-podrome races which "were real races--at least they were so hotly contested as to appear so."

Beacon newsmen finished the story. "The police were kept busy this morning watching for the sneak thieves and pick-pockets who usually follow shows. One fellow was detected in front of the Golden Eagle clothing store while stealing a coat. He was arrested and lodged in the city jail where he gave his name as William Lorton.

Three loiterers were arrested and lodged in jail by the police this morning charged with belonging to the light fingered gentry.

"One of the clerks in the Fuller grocery on Douglas, observed a fellow stealing fruit from the display stands in front of the store as the crowd stood there waiting for the parade this morning. The clerk gave chase and captured the thief who already had enough fruit stolen and carried away to start a fruit stand of his own. The thief returned the fruit and was liberated."

Eleven special police were sworn in for the day to protect the public from the gang of thieves reportedly following the circus. Seven of the special officers were mounted and assigned to patrol designated areas. As the day progressed many arrests were made. The day following the exhibitions the *Beacon* reported the arrest of 18 loiterers, four drunks, six charged with fighting and three for disturbing the peace.

A lemonade vendor on Main Street added a new twist to his thirst quencher. Celluloid slices of lemon floated in his bowl.

Eight Wichita boys disappeared when the show left Wichita. The police at Hutchinson were asked to look for them.

Advertising car No. 1 arrived in Hutchinson on June 15. According to the *Hutchinson Clipper*, "It was in charge of Mr. W. M. Dale who is known all over the United States and Canada as a gentleman and first-class manager in the circus business. The car is a beauty and Mr. Dale assured us that it is but a fair sample of the entire show which will exhibit in Hutchinson July 6."

"The June 28 *Hutchinson Daily News* carried the following handout: "There is one fact which no one would suspect--that it is easier to train an adult lion taken in a snare than one born in a menagerie. The civilized lion would soon be spoiled for work, and the inherent devilry would break forth with awful disaster. Another strange fact is that the older an animal grows, particularly of the feline family, the more dangerous it becomes. The great Wallace shows have both animals born in captivity and taken in their native jungle. The people of Hutchinson and vicinity will have an opportunity to see those animals July

6th, as that is the date when the great Wallace show is in Hutchinson."

On July 1, the *News* reported, "YET ANOTHER CIRCUS CAR. Third Advertising Palace of the Great Wallace Shows Comes and Goes."

"And still they come. It would seem that the Great Wallace Shows is truly a wonder if dependence is to be put in the indications of the advance brigades. A third car came Saturday night [June 24]. Confidence in the promises of this show was established with all who saw the first car, which cost \$10,000, and is a veritable work of art. Then came the second, which was a moving palace and seemed to fill every place available with circus literature. But the third has come and literally 'painted the town red.' This car, a handsome one, is itself a flaming red, and all the advertising matter it carries is of the same hue."

"Mr. W. K. Peck is manager of this car. He is a versatile gentleman and up in every phase of advance advertising. Mr. T. Haggerty, the boss bill poster, has a corps of eighteen assistants and they certainly understand their business, for the flaming red is now on everything, big or little, movable or immovable, to which it can be pasted, nailed, tacked, sewed, screwed, tied, or any other old way, on ice wagons, drays, awnings, boxes, fences, walls, telegraph poles, etc. This show's advertising bill is said to be about \$1,000 a day. This does not seem to be an exaggeration when it is remembered that three cars, with a crew of twenty men each, are kept in the van, not to mention agents who arrange the work for these bill posters and the inspectors who follow and check up their work."

The *Hutchinson Weekly Interior Herald*, June 29, reported that, "There came near being a row on Main Street the other evening between the advance agents of Gentry's dog show and Wallace's circus. One accused the other of telling the truth."

H. B. Gentry's Equine & Canine Paradox played Hutchinson June 28 and 29, Friday and Saturday.

A handout in the *Clipper*, purportedly a quote from the "Toronto Press" stated that, "IT IS A CLEAN, MORAL CIRCUS."

"The Toronto Press has this compliment to pay the Great Wallace Shows: 'The boast of the show is its cleanness; there is a most pleasing absence from the merest approach to vulgarity either in the acts of the artists or language of the clowns. The closest vigilance is observed by the employees towards keeping order in the audience, and the comfort and pleasure of the patrons are looked to with commendable care.'"

The following week the *Clipper* carried a handout explaining the races.

"The contests on the circus hippodrome track are called by all shows 'races,' but the word needs quotation marks with all of them except The Great Wallace Shows. There are no tame, set up, 'fixed' races in that great moral aggregation, which considers it dishonest to advertise a foregone conclusion as a 'race.' If a contestant does not ride or drive to win, his reward is a fine. Real races and no shams are the thing

Illustration from the front of an 1895 Great Wallace herald. Pfening Archives

with this circus. Contestants with the greatest number of winnings at the end of the season receive prizes.

"The Wallace Circus will be in Hutchinson July 6, 1895."

A final handout in the *Clipper* boasted of a nearly miraculous reformation of the Wallace show from its earlier days.

"Gamblers, swindlers and pickpockets frequently try to ply their vocation in the crowds that come to attend a circus. The Great Wallace Shows employ expert detectives to protect their patrons against this class of people."

"Only ladies and gentlemen are employed by the Great Wallace Shows, and all guests are treated as such. The universal courtesy extended to everybody is always commented on. For an employee to give an uncivil answer means his immediate discharge."

After the show had come and gone the

Clipper stated that, "As was expected the Great Wallace Shows drew a large crowd to our city last Saturday, and all expressed themselves as highly pleased with the entire outfit. The street parade was witnessed by thousands of people, and consisted of brass bands, cages of wild animals, elephants, camels, etc., and about the finest looking lot of horses ever seen in Hutchinson."

"The promise of the parade was more than fulfilled in the show itself. The menagerie is a good one, while the performance of over two hours was one of the best ever given in this city--no long weary waiting between acts, no old chestnutty clowns, but something to interest and amuse from opening to close. In fact no circus that ever came to Hutchinson seemed to give better satisfaction than Wallace's."

"All the attaches look carefully after the comfort and pleasure of the vast crowds that daily patronize the circus, and are ever courteous and gentlemanly in word and action. Indeed, Wallace's is a great show."

The *News* reported some "Extra Features. In the circus parade this morning Winne & Silabee and the Van Zandt company were conspicuous features. The mountain lions attracted unusual attention."

There is no elaboration on the mountain lions, but in previous announcements the Van Zandt Implement & Hardware company boasted that it would have a clown in the parade.

In another column the *News* said that, "Girard Leon, the clown in Wallace's show is at the Brunswick hotel," and, "About one hundred and fifty farmers and others took dinner at the Grand Central today. Mr. Jones is becoming quite a popular landlord."

The final word on Wallace's Kansas tour was a report in the *Herald* that, Bruce Taylor had accepted "a lucrative position with Wallace's circus, and would leave with them from Hutchinson, at the close of the performances. Mr. Taylor is a musician of rare talent and will be a valuable acquisition to their already live class of musicians. He will return to Hutchinson about November 1."

The next town was Pueblo, Colorado.

In 1895 the Great Wallace Show played these Kansas towns: July 1, Leavenworth; July 2, Atchison; July 3, Topeka; July 4, Emporia; July 5, Wichita; July 6, Hutchinson. On Sunday July 7 the train made a two hour feed stop in Garden City on the way to Pueblo, Colorado.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Inc. Topeka, Kansas.

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1. CIRCUS MAXIMUM - 1990, French TV special program with unusual acts and entertainers from Europe. 60 MIN.

2. FESTIVAL DU CIRQUE DEMAÏN - 1994, The 16th annual World Circus festival from Paris. Taped live in the Bouglione building and features fantastic competing performers from around the world. 60 MIN.

3. LIFE IN AN INDIAN CIRCUS - 1994, An insightful look at these small, impoverished tent shows and their dedicated performers. 30 MIN.

4. INDIAN ELEPHANTS - 1993, Documentary filmed on location shows these gentle giants at work and play and raising their young. 60 MIN.

5. PHILIPPE PETITE - 1994, Marvelous documentary of the life and career of world renown wire walker. Features scenes filmed at dizzying heights over a huge European mountain gorge. 30 MIN.

7. WILD WEST SHOWS - 1993, TV special with great film footage of both the 2 Bills and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch shows. 60 MIN.

8. "FLYERS" - 1960, Fascinating documentary covering the finest circus flyers, Cadona, Concello, the Bloomington acts & many, many more. 60 MIN.

9. LEARNED PIGS & FIRE PROOF WOMEN - 1989, Ricky Jay's TV special with colorful variety, novelty and sideshow performers featured! 60 MIN.

10. FRANZEN BROS. - 1993, Documentary taped in New England covers the daily grind of touring one day shows. 30 MIN.

11. THE MIGHTY BARNUM - 1934, Wallace Beery stars as the great showman in this romanticized version of his life. 90 MIN.

12. RINGLING/BARNUM SPECIAL - 1968, Another rare one! Filmed in Venice winter quarters live interviews with Pat Valdo, Rudy Bundy, Merle Evans, Charlie Bauman & Harold Ronk. Great stuff. 30 MIN.

12. CIRCUS HORSE ACTS - Two hours of horses, horses and more horses! Liberty, Dressage, Bareback, Comedy - all disciplines are included!

Including John Herriott, Pat White, Sir Billy Baker, plus rare footage of the Cristiani Riders from the 30's. 120 MIN.

13. CIRCUS ELEPHANT ACTS - Another marvelous specialty tape featuring the best contemporary American trainers including Rex Williams, Fred Logan, Buckles Woodcock, Allen Campbell, Chip Arthur, Donnie Carr, Caren Cristiani and more!

Plus, select European acts and rare footage of the Maharajah's Elephant Festival in 1930's India. 120 MIN.

14. HARTFORD FIRE SPECIAL - An engrossing one hour TV documentary with rare footage of the actual fire, Interviews with the suspected arsonist, the family of the previously unidentified "mystery girl" victim and much more. A wealth of information on this the worst tragedy in Circus history. 60 MIN.

15. CIRCUS MAXIMUM - 1993 More from one of Sweden's premiere tent circuses. With fabulous trained animals, musical clowns and variety performers from across Europe. 60 MIN.

16. CIRCUS OLYMPIA - 1993 Marvelous Swedish circus featuring the best in European ground and aerial performers, trained animals and comedy performers. 90 MIN.

17. CIRCUS SCOTT - 1994 The Bronett Family's highly polished performance with Europe's finest talent Wonderful comedy, acrobatic and aerial performers, balanced with the best in trained animal presentations. 60 MIN.

18. RYSKA STATSCIRKUSEN - 1993 Here's another fabulous show produced in Stockholm. Featuring outstanding animal and human performers from the former Soviet Union circuses plus award winners from the rest of Europe. 60 MIN.

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Circus Life and Adventure of ADAM BARDY

A Connecticut magazine recently wrote this about Adam Bardy's book:

"If you're still a kid at heart when the circus comes to town, you'll love Adam Bardy's life story of his adventures of circus life. Adam Bardy was born in Webster on May 21, 1907. Back in 1907 thousands of immigrants from Europe kept coming to America.

"Bardy's life might be compared somewhat to Mark Twain's boyhood heroes Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and back in 1907 in June, Mark Twain met George Bernard Shaw in London. It was a rainy Saturday when the Buffalo Bill Circus came to Webster. Adam Bardy was only 8 years old when he crawled into a circus wagon that night. However on Sunday morning when he crawled out of his hiding place, he wanted to get back home. Bardy had to have a guardian angel as he got back home before he was missed.

"In 1924 Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus played in Worcester. Bardy's interest in the circus was renewed and he got a job with the side show. The circus liked getting young men to join them because it was out of young people that real circus troupers were made.

"Bardy found that circus life in the roaring twenties was rough and tough. On sunny days it was wonderful, but on rainy days you went to bed in the circus cars with wet clothes, and you would have to wait for a sunny day to dry out. If you could put in a full circus season under these conditions, you would be called a real trouper. In the twenties Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey was a railroad circus. It traveled in four sections. The first section was the cookhouse crew along with some circus wagons that carried the cookhouse. The second section carried most of the circus wagons and the stock cars full of work horses and nearly all the working crew. The third section carried the wild animal cages. There were 43 elephants with the circus.

"One of our heroes was Tom Mix and on Saturday afternoon when the local movie theater featured westerns. Tom Mix and his wonder horse Tony was a favorite of young and old movie fans. We recall that Tom

Mix was with the Sells Floto Circus and we were invited to attend the circus and see Mix in person in Willimantic. Adam Bardy was working with the Sells-Floto Circus at the time and knew Mix very well. There were more circuses in business in the twenties than there are now. Hagenback and Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks and Walter L. Main were some of the big ones

"Few folks realized that Tom Mix was at one time a real sheriff, a Deputy U.S. Marshall, a Texas Ranger, a real cow puncher and ranch foreman. He was even Roughrider under Teddy Roosevelt. For Bardy to personally know and work with Mix was one of the truly great thrills of his wonderful life. Mix was one of the truly greats of the silent movies.

"Adam Bardy at the age of 86 can look back at his many adventurous experiences in the circus, life with Gypsies, fortune telling, bootlegging, marriages, and finding love and happiness.

"He has written a book The Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy. This book would have made a wonderful movie with enough wholesome family desires of an eight year old "running away" for a day; joining the circus and becoming a boss canvasman and having his crew set up the big circus tent while still a teenager. Fortune telling, boxing, bootlegging, and after four score years becoming a successful author. With the right promotional agency, the life and adventures of Adam Bardy could be made into a television series that might parallel the Untouchables and

Little House on the Prairie. Many men desire the anonymity of Mister X but Adam Bardy is a real Mr. X . . . Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist, Ex-Still Operator, Ex-Bootlegger, Ex-Fortune Teller, and an excellent author."

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



ADAM BARDY

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